



Roofing & Siding Contractors Alliance, Inc.

News Release

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Be On The Lookout For Roof Leaks This Winter

ST. LOUIS (December 13, 2007) – As the St. Louis region is reminded once again, ice and snow can cause more than a few roofing headaches – particularly when significant accumulation is followed by periods of thawing and refreezing.

Ice that accumulates in valleys, sidewalls, flat roofs and gutters can cause a host of building leaks for homeowners and businesses. The good news is that most of these are one-time leaks associated with the buildup of ice. Here's what the Roofing & Siding Contractors Alliance wants you to look out for this winter and how to determine if an ice leak requires a roofer's attention.

Are these really roof leaks?

Most roof problems that are caused by ice damming occur when the water cannot clear the roof and is drawn up through an opening by "capillary draw". Sometimes the water will actually move uphill. Since ice most commonly forms at gutter lines, valleys, and garage / wall intersections, each of these areas represent ideal places for the water to collect.

A classic location for water to pool is the intersection of a one-story roof, like a garage, adjacent to a two-story wall – especially if the adjoining wall is heated. This problem is exaggerated on the negative pressure (cold) side of the house where the ice and snow buildup has collected and is heavier. Unfortunately, this will cause leak problems that will probably never occur again in the same place and can be considered one-time leaks.

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Can you clean off the roof or use salt?

Please don't try to shovel or salt your roof. Safety is obviously the primary concern as it would be very easy to fall off a ladder or icy roof. Furthermore, the ice can actually freeze onto the roof shingles or a flat roof, temporarily becoming part of the structure. By trying to physically remove the ice, the shingle tabs or flat roof material might break and create more avenues for water infiltration, not to mention additional roof damage, so this is never recommended.

Rock salt, such as sodium chloride or calcium chloride, should not be thrown onto the roof because salt and chemicals that melt ice can cause the same damage to your roof as it does to road (asphalt) pavement.

What can be done?

After the ice and snow have melted, it is recommended that you wait until the first rain to determine if there is any permanent damage. As mentioned, these are usually one-time leaks.

Because of the unique nature of these problems and the fact that it is considered "an act of God", these types of building leaks are often not covered by any warranty or workmanship guarantees. Regardless, homeowners should notify their insurance company just in case a claim should arise.

At any time, should residents or building owners have any questions regarding these types of problems, please contact a member of the Roofing & Siding Contractors Alliance. By consulting with a roofing professional, you can better determine if any roof repairs are needed after the ice and snow have melted.

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The Roofing & Siding Contractors Alliance (RSCA) is a professional contracting group representing more than 60 member companies throughout the St. Louis bi-state region. RSCA was formed in January 2006 through the merger of The Associated Roofing Contractors of Greater St. Louis and The Roofing & Siding Contractors Association. RSCA members provide the complete range of roofing and siding services, for all types of commercial and residential projects in Missouri and Illinois. RSCA promotes the highest industry standards and practices, and solid corporate citizenship, advancing the professional and community profile of its member companies.