



DISASTER MINISTRIES



MAINE CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Winter Storms: Snow and Ice on the Roof

What goes up must come down! Here're some tips for dealing with an abundance of heavy wet snow and/or ice on rooftops and in gutters:

Snow on the Roof

Has snow accumulated on the flat roof over the Christian Education wing? Use a roof or snow rake to remove it, from ground level if possible. If you must use a ladder, be aware that the rungs can freeze and even the safest of work boots can become slick with snow and ice. If you use a metal rake, be careful not to have it be in contact with power lines as the metal will conduct electricity. If you need to get on the flat roof to remove snow, only do so if you've determined the roof is secure and do be wary of slippery edges. Make sure to provide notice to all who use the building and post signs, cones, or caution tape so that people aren't injured by falling snow.

Ice Dams

The icicles hanging from the church may conjure up images of peaceful Christmas cards, but icicles can signal danger. Ice dams occur when the heat in the upper level melts the snow on the roof, causing that water to melt and refreeze. When additional snow melts and can't drain due to an ice dam, it will back up under the shingles and leak through the roof. Ice dams lead to ceiling leaks which lead to water damage...and, really, who has a 50 foot ladder to repaint the sanctuary?

Gutters can be compromised when they're filled with ice. The best way to deal with ice dams is to prevent them by getting even small amounts of snow off of the roof with a roof rake. You can also put calcium chloride ice melt into a leg of pantyhose or a sock and place it so it is across the dam and gutter. This will allow the snow to melt and drain down the gutter.

Gutters & Drains

Speaking of gutters, you'll want to make sure your gutters and downspouts are free of debris. Winter storms can disconnect interlocking pieces, so make sure that connections are tight in order to have them drain effectively. It's a good idea to keep water draining at least three feet from the building.

Ceilings

Steer clear of sagging and bulging ceilings as they could burst open. If you have a manageable-sized bubble, you can insert a screwdriver to allow the water to drain into a bucket below. If your ceiling is wet, don't turn on ceiling lights or fans.

The Maine Conference Disaster Resource and Response Team regularly shares resources for dealing with disasters and traumatic events. Learn more at [Disaster Ministries - Maine Conference United Church of Christ \(maineucc.org\)](http://DisasterMinistries-MaineConferenceUnitedChurchofChrist(maineucc.org)). - Rev. Estelle Margarones, Maine Conference Disaster Coordinator