

It's Ice Dam Season Again

Here's What You Can Do

(NC) Most roofs in Canada develop at least some ice each winter, but if it gets more than a couple of inches thick around the eaves, it can cause leaks.

A build-up of ice like this is called an ice dam, and can be problematic because the water that pools behind the dam can work its way under shingles and cause leaking into the home.

So why do some roofs develop large and damaging ice dams around the eaves, while others don't?

It comes down to the temperature of the roof surface. Lack of insulation or insufficient attic ventilation can cause the main part of your roof to become warm enough to melt snow. As this water runs down the roof, it eventually comes to the edge that overhangs the walls, which is always as cold as the surrounding air because there's no attic space underneath to heat it.

The melted water re-freezes

as it hits the cold eave area. The longer the weather stays cold enough to freeze water, yet warm enough that snow melts on the main part of the roof, the bigger the ice dams get. Varying weather patterns mean that ice dams get much larger during some winters than others.

There are two ways to stop the ice dam problem. The best option involves boosting attic insulation and ventilation so the roof surface becomes colder. If snow doesn't melt on the main part of the roof, ice dams can't form. A professional insulation contractor can provide you with advice on how to fix the dam, and the best way to do the job. You need a pro for this work – having the correct attic ventilation is important and mistakes can lead to major structure problems over time.

Some home designs make it impractical to increase insulation and ventilation enough to prevent a warm roof surface and result-



ing ice dams. In cases like these, electric roof heating cables are an effective fix. They provide a heated drainage path that allows melted roof water to make its way off the roof. A little ice may still

build up on the eaves with roof heating in place, but it won't get thick enough to cause trouble. A professional roof contractor can install this type of system for you.

If you're looking for a

contractor, the Canadian Home Builder's Association offers free unbiased information on how to hire a contractor the smart and safe way. Find more information at www.getitinwriting.ca.

Plan The Ultimate Kitchen Island

(NC) Whether you use your kitchen island as an entertainment centre, a homework spot or a pastry prep area, getting the most out of this hardworking hub takes planning.

Design expert Kimberley Seldon partnered with the Electrical Safety Authority to share her top three ideas for designing the ultimate kitchen island.

Plan for entertaining. Adding a wine fridge tucked into the side of the island looks great and comes in handy when serving guests. Consider freeing precious counter space by moving microwaves and other small appliances into built-in lower sections as well. Or add a set of freezer drawers facing the sink to store extra food when the whole family stops by.

Remember, all major appliances in a kitchen, including microwaves, require a dedicated outlet. Consult your licensed electrical contractor about the requirements for these appliances, especially if you plan to have more than one fridge or freezer.

Chef-approved design. With additional space for food prep and room for a built-in cooktop, an island is a gourmet's dream. One of the top requested cooking surfaces is an induction cooktop, which is cool to the touch as soon as it is turned off. Before you start measuring for installation, check the power requirements. An induction cooktop can draw a significant electrical load and will need to be on a dedicated circuit.

Take a seat. If there is room, consider including multi-use seating. A breakfast bar is a great spot for the family to gather for a quick bite before running off to work, but it can also become a homework station. Integrate outlets into the side or base of the island to power laptops and other devices.

Tamper Resistant (TR) outlets are required and help prevent children from receiving a burn or shock by keeping little fingers and objects out of electrical sockets. Adding USB-only outlets will create a charging station for all your devices. While USB outlets can be hidden inside a drawer, a standard outlet cannot be as this would create a fire hazard.

Find more design and electrical tips online at poweryourreno.ca.

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