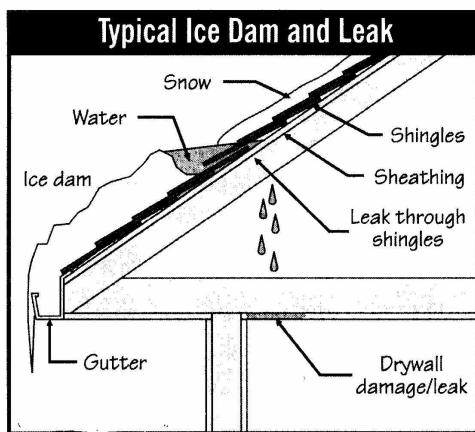




Ice Dam = Damage

An ice dam is a ridge of ice that builds up along the edge of a roof. The ice creates a dam that backs water up and under the roof shingles. Once the water is deep enough, it penetrates the roofing system and creates water damage inside the home.



Beneath the ice dam, undetectable damage is occurring in the attic and wall cavities. The wood framing is wet and may be rotting, insulation is soaked –

which makes it inefficient and mildew and mold can grow in hidden spots causing odors and other problem inside the home.

Soaked framing and insulation will take a long time to dry out and will continue to contribute to wall damage and interior moisture problems. Uncorrected, the water can cause serious structural damage.

Once the ice dam is high enough to overcome the pitch of the roof, water seeps under asphalt shingles. The alternate freezing and thawing that occurs under these conditions can increase the magnitude of roof leaks. Once the water has penetrated the singles, it flows under the siding and eaves and leaks through the framing into your home. To prevent ice dams, eliminate heat buildup in the attic space below the roof deck by:

- **Improving insulation** - Add insulation to improve the thermal envelope and slow heat transfer to the attic. Surfaces between the attic and the heated living space should be insulated to R-38 or more.

- **Stopping air “bypass”** - Seal any opening that allows heated air to “bypass” the insulation and rise into the attic. The warm air in your home will always try to rise and will push through any small opening. The attic door should be weather-stripped even better than an exterior door. Exhaust fans should not empty into the attic and the area between the frame of the fan and the ceiling should be tightly sealed.

- **Increasing attic ventilation** will cool the space and remove unwanted moisture. The temperature in the attic space should be nearly the same as the outside temperature. When fixing attic insulation, avoid blocking any vents with insulation. The best ventilation system is balanced between low-intake from the overhangs and high-exhaust vents on the attic roof.

If ice dams have already developed you may be able to wait out the problem and work on insulation and ventilation in the spring if the water damage is not excessive.



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Electric Dryer 101

“I was having a wonderful morning, until the heating unit went out on my electric dryer! The repairman went in to the dryer and pulled out the lint filter. It was clean. We always clean the lint from the filter after every load of clothes. He told us that he wanted to show us something.

He took the filter over to the sink, ran hot water over it. Now, the lint filter is made of a mesh material - I'm sure you know what your dryer's lint filter looks like. WELL.....the hot water just sat on top of the mesh!!! It didn't go through it at all!!! He told us that ‘dryer sheets’ create a film over the mesh restricting the air flow and that's what burns out the heating unit. You can't SEE the film, but it's there. This is also what causes dryer units to catch fire and potentially burn your house down! He said the best way to keep your dryer working for a very long time (and to keep your electric bill lower) is to take that filter out & wash it with hot soapy water & an old toothbrush (or other brush) at least every six months.

He said that makes the life of the dryer at least twice as long! How about that???!?! Learn something new everyday! I certainly didn't know dryer sheets would do that Note: I went to my dryer & tested my screen by running water on it. The water ran through a little bit but mostly collected all the water in the mesh screen. I washed it with warm soapy water & a nylon brush & I had it done in 30 seconds. Then when I rinsed it and the water ran right thru the screen! There wasn't any puddling at all! That repairman knew what he was talking about!



Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil, and water from the natural decay of uranium. While levels in outdoor air pose a relatively low threat to human health, radon can accumulate to dangerous levels inside buildings. You can't see, smell, or taste it, but an elevated radon level in your home may be affecting the health of your family.

Indeed, two homes right next to each other can have vastly different radon levels. Just because your neighbor's house does not have an elevated level of radon does not mean that your house will have a low radon level. The only way to know if your home is under the EPA action level of 4 pCi/L is to test. High levels of radon in homes usually come from the surrounding soil. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/radon/healthrisks.html>

Radon presents a serious healthcare risk, but it can be controlled easily and cost-effectively. Take action today. Encourage your friends and family to do the same!



ASK THE INSPECTOR

When should I call for a home inspection and do I need to be present for the inspection?

Erick's Response:

Typically, a home inspector is contacted immediately after the contract or purchase agreement has been signed. Before you sign, be sure there is an inspection clause in the sales contract, making your final purchase obligation contingent on the findings of a professional home inspection. This clause should specify the terms and conditions to which both the buyer and seller are obligated.

While it's not required that you be present for the inspection, it is highly recommended. You will be able to observe the inspector and ask questions as you learn about the condition of the home and how to maintain it.



DID YOU KNOW?

Oak trees do not have acorns until they are fifty years old or older.

A dime has 118 ridges around the edge.

A “jiffy” is an actual unit of time for 1/100th of a second!