Headline: Ice dams can cause serious issues

Deckhead: AAA breaks down what they are, how they damage homes

Icicles hanging from the roof might make a perfect setting for a painting – a winter wonderland, no doubt. But what if they are ice dams? Well, that’s another story.

Ice dams form when warm air from inside your home melts snow on your roof. It refreezes at the eaves, creating a dam. As melting and freezing continue, water pools behind the dam and could eventually leak into your home, resulting in costly water damage.

Ice dams are a battle you don’t want to fight. Protect your roof and your wallet by taking the necessary steps to prevent ice dams from forming.

Ice dams are a headache for homeowners. They look unsightly and can cause serious damage to your roof and house structure. Without proper insulation, warm air from inside the house leaks into the attic and melts snow on the roof.

This welted snow refreezes at the colder eaves – creating an ice dam – which forces its way under the shingles and finds holes in the roof decking. Suddenly, you have water dripping into your attic. You can avoid this nightmare by making sure your house is properly insulated. It could save you trouble and money in the future.

AAA recommends these steps:

* Increase attic ventilation through the use of soffit and ridge vents to help circulate air through the attic, ensuring a consistent temperature.
* Examine your insulation to make sure it’s not blocking the vents and check its depth.
* Prevent heat from escaping into your attic by ensuring all attic ducts are sealed and properly insulated, and any exhaust fans lead outdoors, not to the attic.
* Consult a professional if your attic is a living space, you need vents installed or insulation added.

It’s important to take steps to prevent ice dams from forming in the first place. One of the best ways is to make sure your attic insulation is adequate and properly installed.

Keeping the bottom couple of feet of roof and gutters clear of snow can help minimize ice dam formation, but it’s not a foolproof solution. If you do find yourself with major ice dams, do not attempt to remove them yourself or get up on your roof. Instead, call for a professional with experience in removing ice dams safely and effectively – just be sure to ask about their methods first, as chipping or sawing away at the ice can cause damage to shingles. Prevention is key when it comes to avoiding costly repairs down the line.

Don’t let ice dams lead to winter blues. If you notice water damage or leaks coming into your home, acting quickly is key. Contact your insurance provider as soon as possible and review your plan’s coverage for ice dam damage. While many policies have this protection, there could be exclusions, so it’s important to double-check. With a little bit of research, you can keep winter worries at bay. Visit the U.S. Department of Energy for more information about how much insulation you need.

Cutline: WINTER PROBLEM – Ice dams form in a gutter, potentially causing serious damage to the home. Image: soupstock. Adobe Stock.