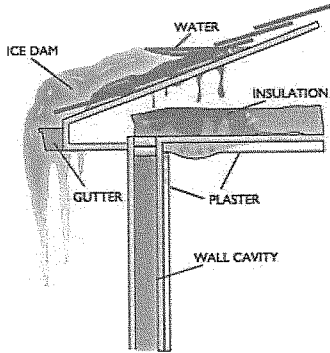# Ice Dam Prevention

What Causes Ice Dam's?

An ice dam is formed when heat from the interior space of the structure, vents up through the ceiling and exits the roof causing the snow to melt. This melting snow then moves down the slope of the roof and contacts the cold unheated overhang section of the roof and accumulates to form the ice dam. Once this ice is formed, water is then pushed back up the roof where it penetrates through seams, valleys and disturbed shingles. As water enters though the seams it saturates the insulation and inner wall cavities. This damage can happen over several seasons, before it eventually is observed and noticed through staining of the drywall, or dripping occurs.

Preventative Tips:

- Make sure your gutters are clear of leaves and debris.

- Check and seal places where warm air could leak from your house to the attic: vent pipes, exhaust fans, chimneys, attic hatches and light fixtures are all possibilities.

- Inspect, or have your roof and attic inspected for proper ventilation and insulation. Proper ventilation and insulation are key contributors to ice dam prevention.

- If you have soffit vents in your eaves, make sure they are not blocked and insulation surrounding them is secured so that air can flow easily.

- Install a rubberized ice and water shield beneath the roof shingles for the lower three feet of the eaves. This is typically installed as part of new or re-roofing projects.

- Install snow and ice slides. These are metal strips about 24" wide installed over the existing roof to prevent ice and snow from "bonding" to the lower roof. This is a retrofit solution used as an alternative to rubberized ice and water shield.

What Can I Do Now?

Winter is obviously not the best season to install new or retrofit your existing roof. If there is a large accumulation of snow on your roof and you are concerned about ice dams, consider having a contractor remove the snow from the bottom 2-3 feet of a sloped roof. Special attention should be paid to low sloped/flat roofs and valleys.