

# Weathering the Weather

*Snow, ice, and below freezing temperatures can wreak havoc on your home. Preventing ice dams, frozen pipes, and keeping the warm air inside where it belongs will go a long way in making sure your home is in tip-top shape before Old Man Winter shows up.*



**The Great Winter  
Weather Prep**



## Ice Dams

*What is an ice dam? Ice dams are formed when air in the attic is warm enough to cause snow and ice on the roof to thaw and refreeze repeatedly. Pools of water then become trapped under layers of ice that seep under your roof covering (tiles or shingles) into the attic. There are very specific do's and don'ts to prevent ice dams from causing significant damage to your roof and attic.*

**DO's** – The best way to prevent ice dams is to keep the temperature in the attic cool enough to keep snow on the roof from melting. Ways to do that include:

- ✿ Keeping the warm air downstairs where it belongs with sufficient insulation on the floor of the attic. Consider also using a dehumidifier to control water vapor.
- ✿ Sealing all openings that would allow vapor to rise into the attic, this includes any holes created from installing light fixtures and ceiling fans.
- ✿ Providing good attic ventilation to replace warm air in the attic with cold outside air.

**DON'TS** — Equally important as the do's, there are things you should always avoid to minimize roof damage in the winter:

- ✿ Climb up on the roof to remove the snow. You can cause significant damage to your roof coverings not to mention yourself if you were to slip and fall.
- ✿ Install large pieces of equipment in the attic. This will only raise the temperature in the winter months.
- ✿ Use salt or other minerals to melt the snow on your roof. These are very damaging to roof shingles and tiles, as well as gutters and downspouts.

*Source: [State Farm](#)*

## Foam, Dome, Drip to Prevent Frozen Pipes

*Damage from frozen pipes is the second most common cause of insurance claims in America. The average homeowner will have to spend thousands to repair damage from a frozen, leaking pipe. With just three simple steps, you can protect your home from this costly damage. Remember: FOAM, DOME, DRIP*

- ✿ **FOAM:** Insulate pipes exposed to the elements or cold drafts. For as little as \$1 per 6' of insulation, you can stop pipes from freezing and save energy. By keeping your water warmer, you reduce the amount of energy needed to heat water in the cold, winter months.
- ✿ **DOME:** Placing an insulating dome or other coverings on outdoor faucets and spigots also reduces the likelihood of the water in your home's pipes from freezing, expanding, and causing a costly leak.
- ✿ **DRIP:** By allowing a slow drip from your faucets, you reduce the build-up of pressure in the pipes. Even if the pipes freeze, you have released the pressure from the water system reducing the likelihood of a rupture. If you are going out of town, and you suspect they temperatures will drop, turn off the water to your home and open all of the taps to drain the water system. This way you won't return to a mess.

Your local home improvement store will have all of the tools and expertise you will need to complete these steps. FOAM, DOME, DRIP your way to a safe and winter!

*Source: [Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, Inc. -- FLASH](#)*

## Insulation

*Your feet aren't the only things that need a nice warm blanket during the winter months. The best way to weather the winter weather is to keep all of that warm toasty air inside! Doors and windows are just some of the places that you should ensure are well insulated before the temperatures start to drop.*

- ✿ Look for air leaks around windows and doors using a lit incense stick. If the smoke is sucked out of an opening, seal the leak with caulk, spray foam or weather stripping. Don't forget about holes in the attic, basement, and crawlspaces!
- ✿ The easiest place to insulate that will generate the biggest results is your attic. The US Environmental Protection Agency suggests at least 12 – 15 inches of insulation on the floor of your attic (more if you are in a colder climate).
- ✿ If you don't have energy efficient windows, consider using shrink film window insulation kit from a local hardware store.

*Source: [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)*

