

LOSS PREVENTION

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ahla ALBERTA HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION

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Roof Collapse Hazard!

Our climate has been very unpredictable for the past several years with extreme winter conditions. Recent winter storms in many parts of Canada have dumped in excess of 60 cm of wet, heavy snow and freezing rain putting a strain on buildings and equipment. This wet snow has resulted in much heavier than expected loads on roofs that could exceed the strength of the roof supports causing the roof to sag or even collapse. Several roofs have sagged and even collapsed in past weeks.

Even if spring is around the corner, more snowfalls can be expected during the next few weeks. These spring snowfalls are loaded with moisture and produce very wet, heavy buildups that can over-load roof structures if accumulations are not removed.

Snow melts will not immediately remedy the problem because snow will be transformed into water and ice. The accumulation of water will create even more stress on the roof members and add to the risk of water infiltration.

Check your roof for heavy snow accumulations and remove excess snow and ice load conditions that could damage your building. Use caution not to damage the roof when removing the snow – leave a 3-4" cushion over the roofing.

Risk Factors for Roof Collapse:

- Building age (built before 1977 are more at risk);
- Structures with flat roofs, low angle peaks or slopes;
- Size (buildings over 5,000 sq. ft. are more at risk);
- Roofs with different elevations allowing snow drift at changes from 1 story to 2 story etc.;
- Snow accumulations more than 12" high on the roof.

Be Very Attentive for Signs of a Sagging Roof:

- Cracks appearing on interior walls;
- Interior doors that fit tighter or jam;
- Deformations or cracks in the ceiling;
- Building noises (crackling, groaning, etc.)

If one or more of these factors apply – Immediate action is needed.

Spring Thaw:

During spring thaw, it is important to pay attention to icicle formation at roof edges. They could break off and hit pedestrians or vehicles close to the building, resulting in injuries and damages. Water runoff can freeze later in the day, creating ice patches that may result in slip and fall incidents.

Slip and Fall Prevention:

- Remove snow and ice accumulation on roofs and overhangs;
- Keep entrances and exits clear of snow and ice;
- Redirect water runoff away from sidewalks and entrances;
- Sand/salt icy patches regularly (especially when temperature drops below freezing);
- Install non-skid floor mats at entrances and extend into store far enough to allow customers to dry shoes;
- Put up "Caution – Wet Floor" signs at entrances and at the end of floor mats;
- Keep mats dry (wet vacuum or replace wet mats often);
- Increase the frequency of floor maintenance checks at entrances;
- Record all checks and cleans on the Floor Maintenance Logs.



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