



Melting Snow Could Mean Wasted Energy for Your Home

(Toronto, February 25) Today's snowfall is the perfect opportunity for GreenSaver to remind homeowners to check their roofs for signs of heat loss.

Snow melting patterns can indicate heat loss through your attic. An ideal attic is designed to maintain a temperature consistent with the outside temperature. In the wintertime, an attic should be cold, so snow on your roof is generally a good sign.

Attics that are inadequately insulated or sealed will allow heat from the house to enter. This will heat the roof and melt the snow. An inefficient attic will result in higher energy bills and could also lead to ice damming, a common but serious problem for Canadian houses.

Ice dams are created when melted snow and ice from the roof accumulate and re-freeze around the edges and eaves of the roof. These icicles not only pose a danger if they fall, but they can cause major damage to your roof including warped shingles, rotting wood, and moisture and mold problems.

Fixing any of these problems is much more expensive than preventing them. Melted snow on the roof is a clue that your attic is losing heat. The best time to check for snow melt is on an overcast day, or before sunrise. Melted snow, or bare patches, probably means there's a issue. You'll want to consider an ecoEnergy home audit to determine exactly where the problem is and how to fix it.

Here are some recommendations from GreenSaver on how to prevent heat loss and avoid ice damming: □

- **Seal the Attic Access Hatch** – an attic hatch or door should be both insulated and weather stripped. □
- **Potlights** – choose sealed pot lights or avoid installing them on the top floor. If you have already installed unsealed potlights, have a professional install an industry approved pre-made plastic cover for insulation.
- **Bathroom Fans** – these need to be ducted and properly vented to the outside.
- **Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) Registers** – if the house has air vents in the ceilings, remove the vent covers and caulk the joint between the ducting and the ceiling. □
- **Attic Knee-Walls** – houses with half-storeys have triangular attics at the edges of the uppermost floor and are therefore prone to warm air infiltration at the floor joist area. A professional insulation and air sealing job can greatly reduce heat loss in this areas □

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- **Duct Work Sealed and Insulated** – ductwork can be poorly sealed at joints, and can leak air. In winter, ductwork that travels through an attic will leak warm moist air directly into the attic. □
- **Plumbing Stacks and Chimneys** – seal these major sources of air leakage where they pass through the attic floor. For metal chimneys inside a chase or for old masonry chimneys, you may need help from an expert to ensure proper sealing and to avoid fire hazards. □

An energy assessment is the best way to determine how well your home and attic are insulated. GreenSaver recommends having an experienced Certified Energy Advisor assess your house. The insulation evaluation, and blower-door test - both standard parts of the assessment - will pinpoint exactly where air is-leaking so that the energy advisor can tell you how to solve the problem.

Make sure your energy assessment is approved by Natural Resources Canada for the ecoENERGY program. An assessment will generally cost \$300-\$400 dollars, and the Province of Ontario will provide a rebate of up to \$150 for an approved assessment. The ecoENERGY program also includes up to \$10 000 per house for efficiency retrofits , including up to \$1500 for attic insulation and up to \$860 for air sealing. This means savings *now* towards making the upgrades and repairs, and savings *later*, on your energy bills. You'll save yourself a headache, too, by addressing this common issue before it becomes a serious problem in your home.

For further information or to schedule a GreenSaver Energy Assessment for an upcoming story, please contact:

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***GreenSaver** is an independent non-profit corporation dedicated to environmental energy efficiency. They have pioneered Ontario residential energy conservation for 25 years with economically viable and environmentally friendly measures to help individuals and organizations with their energy need (www.greensaver.org).*