

Green Attic Insulation Explains Why Ice Dams Still Happen Even After Attic Upgrades

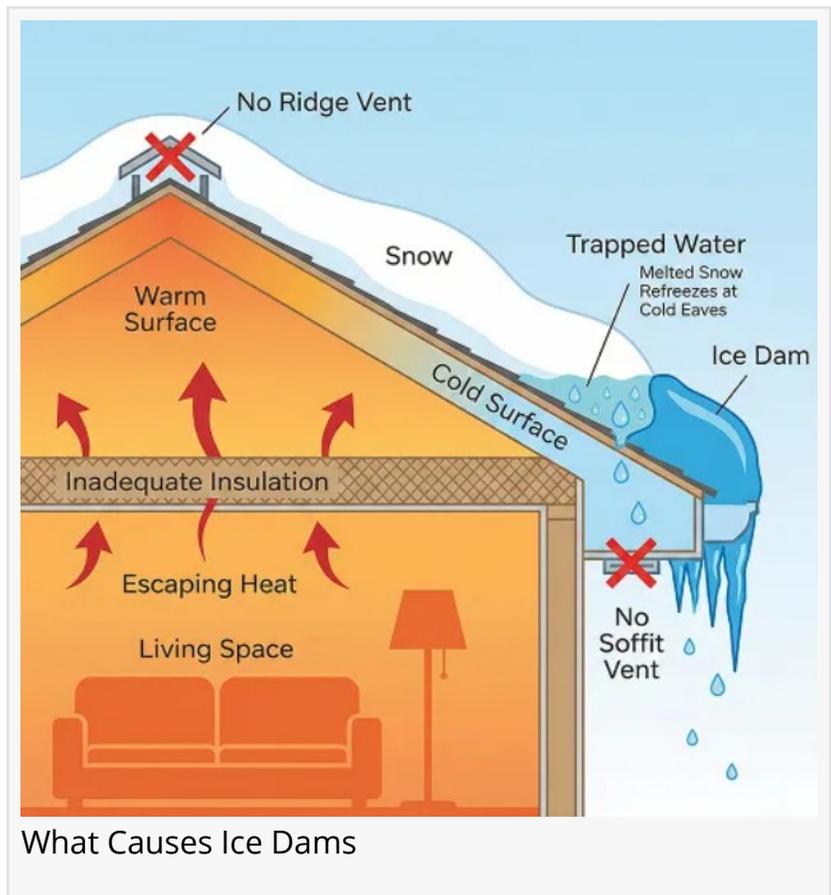
New report breaks down why attic insulation alone can't stop ice dams and which air sealing, ventilation and roof upgrades actually protect Chicago homes.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- When winter hits Chicago, ice dams and icicles become a common concern for homeowners, even those who recently upgraded their attic insulation.

Green Attic has released a new educational resource to help homeowners understand [how to insulate attic to prevent ice dams](#) and why insulation and ventilation, while critical, cannot eliminate them entirely.

Snow melts because the roof warms unevenly and because some heat will always escape from the home. The goal isn't about perfection. Rather, it's about minimization.



Why Ice Dams Form (Even in Well-Insulated Homes)

“

Green is not just branding
it's an extension of what we
do of our work.”

*Andrei Turea, co-owner of
Green Attic Insulation*

Ice dams form when the roof surface warms above freezing while the roof edges (soffits) remain cold. After running down the roof, the melted snow hits the cold edge and refreezes into an ice ridge.

Apart from that, there are a few unavoidable contributors:

1. Natural Sun Heat

Even on cold days, the sun warms the roof and melts snow. This alone can create icicles and it

has nothing to do with insulation quality.

2. Some Heat Always Escapes the House

Insulation slows heat loss and it cannot stop it entirely. Even a perfectly sealed attic will still allow minor heat transfer.

3. Cathedral Ceilings & Tight Soffit Areas

These areas often have 4–6 inches of usable space, far less than the preferred 16–18 inches. Limited space = limited insulation = higher heat touching the roof deck.

4. Ductwork or Furnace in the Attic

Any mechanical equipment in the attic acts like a heater. That extra warmth speeds up snowmelt.

5. Roof Vents Blocked by Snow

Ridge vents and roof vents don't work well in winter if they're buried in snow. Without airflow, heat builds up inside the attic.

This is why you may still see some icicles, even after professional work. But rest assured. It's a completely normal phenomenon. The objective is to reduce severe ice damming, not to eliminate all icicles forever.

How Green Attic Minimizes Ice Dams

Over 15 years, we've refined a system that significantly reduces ice dam formation:

1. Air Sealing the Attic Floor

Stopping warm indoor air from leaking upward is step one. This alone cuts heat loss dramatically.

2. Installing Baffles in Every Rafter Bay

Proper baffles make sure there is uninterrupted airflow from the soffits through the attic. This prevents heat buildup near the roof deck.

3. Blowing 10–18 Inches of Cellulose Insulation

Aiming for 10 inches or more will lower your risk considerably. If you have less than 10 inches, some ice damming is still possible.

4. Adding a Solar Attic Fan (Strongly Recommended)

A solar fan actively removes heat from the attic, which is something passive roof vents cannot do in winter when they're covered by snow. Crucially, even with low sunlight, the fan can still move air and reduce attic heat.

Note on Installation: We install fans in the spring once the roof is safe and snow-free. Winter installations are done only when conditions allow safe access.

Advanced Ice Dam Reduction for Tight Spaces (4–6 Inch Eaves)

If your soffit or eave area has limited space, then don't settle for standard insulation. For homeowners who want to go beyond that, we offer a premium option:

Closed-Cell Spray Foam at the Eaves

We remove existing insulation, prepare and air seal the roof deck, install a tall containment baffle, and spray closed-cell foam (R-7 to R-7.5 per inch). This process increases insulation value by an incredible 35–40 R-value in areas that are normally impossible to insulate properly. Due to the complexity and specialized materials required, this upgrade starts at \$2,000+, depending on attic size.

About Our [Ice Dam Removal Service](#) (Emergency Only)

We do not offer routine ice dam removal as it is dangerous and expensive.

We only accept removals when:

- ☐ There is active water damage
- ☐ There is danger to people (e.g., businesses, walkways, entrances)
- ☐ Conditions are safe enough for our crew to work

Pricing & Expectations

- ☐ Starts at \$2,500
- ☐ Final cost depends on a number of factors, such as the number of stories and roof pitch
- ☐ We use professional steam equipment to cut channels through the ice
- ☐ We remove enough ice to allow melting water to drain, not always 100% of the ice (that's both impractical and unnecessary)

If the temperatures will warm in a few days and your home has an ice & water shield under the shingles, you may be better off letting it melt naturally and investing that money into insulation upgrades instead. Always check with your insurance, as some policies cover ice dam removal to prevent further damage.

When Should You Actually Worry?

Contact us if you see:

- ☐ Water stains on ceilings or walls
- ☐ Icicles forming over walkways or entry doors
- ☐ Large ice ridges growing rapidly
- ☐ Ice dams in multiple areas of the roof

Small icicles are normal. Massive ones are a warning sign.

The Bottom Line

You can minimize ice dams, but you cannot eliminate them 100%. Sun, snow cover, harsh winter conditions, and roof design will always create some melting and refreezing.

The best long-term strategy is a combination of:

- ☐ Proper air sealing
- ☐ High R-value insulation
- ☐ Baffles at every rafter
- ☐ A solar attic fan
- ☐ Optional closed-cell spray foam at tight soffit areas

About Green Attic

[Green Attic Insulation](#) is a Chicagoland-area contractor specializing in residential and commercial

insulation. The company focuses on improving energy efficiency with eco-friendly materials such as cellulose and spray foam. Services range from attic retrofitting and air sealing to mold remediation, and Green Attic is known for detailed energy assessments and educating customers on available rebates.

Andrei Turea

Green Attic Insulation

+1 847-929-9492

[email us here](#)

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