

Building Standards Advisory

Promoting construction of safe, healthy, habitable buildings

Snow Loads on Roof

Question

“What do I do if there is deep snow on my roof?”

Answer

Take the following precautions to protect your safety and property:

- Monitor snow levels
 - Any time snow is more than 2 feet deep over the whole roof or when the snow load is not distributed evenly, building owners should be concerned.
 - This depth is a guideline only. If you experience any warning signs that your roof is in distress, call a structural engineer or other qualified professional to assess the roof.
 - Keep *exits* clear
 - Ensure that all entrances, emergency exits, and sidewalks are clear of ice and snow.
 - Doors and windows should open easily. Knowing two ways out of your home or any public place is an important part of an emergency escape plan.
 - Keep vents clear
 - Clear snow and ice away from any vents that go through the roof and/or exterior walls. Your health or your property can be affected if these are blocked.
 - Identify any places where snow and ice build-up might affect electrical or gas lines and if so, call the appropriate authorities.
- Owners and residents of flat-roof buildings in particular are urged to be aware of the possible snow load danger.

Compliance with *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act, Regulations and the National Building Code of Canada 2010 (NBC 2010)* is addressed in this advisory. Words in italics, other than Act titles, are defined in the NBC 2010.

Be Safe

- Do not go on your roof. If necessary contact a structural engineer to assess your roof or other qualified professional who can access your roof using appropriate fall protection.
- When using a ladder to work at the edge, be sure it is suitable for the task (in terms of strength and height) and secured from slipping or accidental movement, against the structure of the *building*. Always maintain a three point stance using your hands and feet.
- When using a roof rake or similar device from below to remove snow from the roof be sure that you and others keep clear of falling snow.
- If chopping ice on your roof or eaves ensure that you and others are clear of falling ice. Ensure that the tool used to chop the ice does not damage roof surface or structure as this could lead to additional issues related to water leakage into the *building*.

Background

- High snow loads on roofs could create risk to personal safety or building damage and collapse.
- All *buildings* including, carports, decks, and awnings may be affected.

Snow Loads on Roof

The information contained in this release is of a general nature and is not intended to be all-inclusive. Property owners should determine their own actions related to heavy snow precautions. It is recommended that property owners contact a structural engineer to assess their roof or other qualified professional to do any snow removal.

Building Standards and Licensing Branch
100 - 1855 Victoria Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3T2
(306) 787-4113 Phone
(306) 798-4172 Fax
building_standards@gov.sk.ca
www.saskatchewan.ca/buildingstandards

Building Standards Advisory
Snow Loads on Roof
October 2015

Original approved and signed by:
Wm. Hawkins, Executive Director/Chief Building Official

This advisory is published by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Government Relations for purposes of providing information to users on the topic contained herein. In case of conflict between *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standard Act* (the UBAS Act), the National Building Code of Canada 2010 (NBC 2010) and this advisory, provisions of the UBAS Act and NBC 2010 shall apply.