

# Loss Prevention Safety Tip



Loss Prevention  
Program

By Red River Mutual

## HEAVY SNOW LOADS ON ROOFS

Homeowners, tenants and businesses should be aware of the dangers posed by heavy snow loads on roofs and the warning signs of potential structural weaknesses. In some instances, the risks posed by accumulated snow on roofs can be mitigated by safely removing snow from roofs of both commercial buildings and homes.

Flat and low pitched roofs, most often found on industrial buildings but are also used in certain home designs, are at the greatest risk of buckling under heavy snow and ice accumulations. Lower roofs, where snow accumulates from higher roofs are also vulnerable.



### Signs of Roof Problems Due to Heavy Snow Load

- Sagging
- Leaks
- Cracked or split wood members
- Bends or ripples in supports
- Cracks in walls or masonry
- Sheared off screws from steel frames
- Sprinkler heads that have dropped down below ceiling tiles
- Doors that pop open, become stiff or jammed
- Doors or windows that are difficult to open
- Bowed utility pipes or conduit attached at ceiling
- Creaking, cracking or popping sounds

### Tips to Remove Snow and Ice from Roofs and Other Areas

- Consider hiring professionals to do the job. The combination of heights plus ice makes this one of the more dangerous maintenance tasks.
- If you don't hire professionals, have someone outside with you in case anything does go wrong.
- Use a telescoping snow rake for pitched roofs (available at most hardware stores) to remove snow from your roof.
- Start from the edge and work your way into the roof.
- Try to shave the snow down to 2 or 3 inches on the roof instead of scraping the roof clean, which will risk damage to your shingles or other roof covering.
- Keep in mind metal tools conduct electricity if it touches a power line, stay well clear.
- Remove large icicles carefully if they're hanging over doorways and walkways. Consider knocking down icicles through windows using a broom stick.
- Wear protective equipment when performing any of these tasks.
- Keep gutters and drains clean, free of ice and snow and keep downspouts clear at ground level.

**See more loss prevention tips at [www.preventingloss.com](http://www.preventingloss.com)**

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