



Ask a Professional Roofing & Siding

Q: Icicles are hanging off my eaves. Are they a problem?

A: The icicles aren't the problem, but the symptom. The ice dams are the real problem and they can cause serious damage to your roof and to your walls. Large amounts of snow create the perfect conditions for ice dams and icicles. Ice dams are formed as heat escapes from the house and reaches the roof and the snow. The joint where the top of the walls and the roof meet, are the areas most susceptible to this problem. The heat melts the snow and when it gets cold again, it refreezes as ice. The ice on the roof, under the snow, melts and refreezes and crawls up the roof. Icicles form as the water drips over the frozen gutters. This is when the trouble starts. As the ice melts, water eventually finds its way into your house. It runs between the studs and soaks the insulation. It runs in above the windows and doors and down the wall or behind the wallpaper and ruins the drywall or plaster. Water spots on the walls and ceilings appear in the most peculiar places. Ice can damage your shingles and the underlying roof system. The best advice I can give, is to get the snow and ice off your roof, at least the bottom 3' at the eaves. Call a roofing contractor for help or shovel it off yourself. Throw de-icer pellets on your roof to help facilitate the ice melting and pull the first chunks of ice out off the gutter. (They come out easy after you get the first on out.). If it's time to re-roof your house, be sure to use Ice and Water Shield at your gutter edges and over your valleys. If you have a roof with a low pitch, consider installing Ice and Water Shield over the entire roof. The rubber membrane creates one more barrier that the water needs to penetrate.

Q: Can I install Vinyl siding over the existing wood cladding?

A: Yes, but the wood siding needs to be in good shape. Water damage and rot must be addressed so as not to compound the problem by covering it up with new siding. Mold and fungi are a little trickier. Mold and fungi become dormant when their moisture source is removed, or when the moisture content falls below 20% moisture content, the spores are still viable and decay will begin again if exposed to moisture and temperature conditions. Topical fungicides tend to be short-lived. If you are certain the exterior moisture (rain, sleet, snow) is the only culprit for the decay, then cladding the house with a foam board product and/or furring strips and vinyl siding can be a practical option. If the moisture source cannot be identified, isolated and corrected, the safest route is to follow with regard to occupant health and contractor liability is to remove the wood cladding before installing new siding.

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