**Preventing Ice Dams on Eaves**

Ice dams along eaves may cause considerable damage to the roof and inside walls of a house.

Poorly insulated attics are the chief cause of ice build-up on eaves. Ice forms when the snow melts off a warm roof, runs down to the eave line, and refreezes there. Ice in the eave trough prevents water from running off freely. If water backs up high enough, it may seep under shingles and down into the house. Sometimes it leaks through plaster walls and ceilings.

Ice dams are usually a problem only on cold days when the roof is warmer than the eave overhang. On warm days the snow melts at the same rate on the eaves and water runs off freely.

**To Prevent Ice Dams**

1) Insulate between the top floor ceiling and the attic, or along the underside of the eaves if the attic is used as living space. This is the best way to prevent heat loss through the attic roof. Insulation will also help cut fuel bills.

2) Ventilate the attic through eave soffits, louvers, and roof ventilators. Use one square foot of ventilation opening (inlets and outlets) for every 150 square feet of attic floor. Provide half of this in the eave and half at the ridge.

3) Use electric heating cables along the eaves if insulation or ventilation is not possible.

Cables can be strung out along the edge of eaves. When plugged in, they will heat the area, melt any ice already formed, and prevent further freezing when water drips off the roof. Be sure cables are approved for the intended use by Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Check with your electrician for correct installation.

*Do not use salt to melt snow or ice from the roof! Salt will rust nails and damage gutters and downspouts.*

