



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY**



MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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Kurt N. Schwartz
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MEMA INFORMATION ABOUT THE THREAT OF ROOF COLLAPSE

Additional Snow Buildup Can Present Dangers

FRAMINGHAM, MA – “With the threat of approaching storms, additional snow can add weight and stress to the roofs of structures if not cleared. Also, for areas that get rain, the dry, fluffy snow piled on roofs can act as a sponge, absorbing any additional sleet and rain,” says Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Director Kurt Schwartz. “Flat, commercial roofs are most susceptible if they are not draining properly.”

To minimize the risk of over-stressing a building roof due to accumulated or drifting snow:

- Be on the alert for large accumulating snow build-up or snowdrifts on your roofs.
- If roof snow can be removed, from the ground, with the use of a snow rake (available at most hardware stores), do so. Use caution, as metal snow rakes conduct electricity if they come into contact with a power line.
- Try to avoid working from ladders, as ladder rungs tend to ice up. Snow and ice collect on boot soles, and metal ladders.
- Flat roofs can be shoveled clear, but only if it is determined that the roof is safe to stand upon. Exercise care when on the roof to avoid potentially dangerous falls.
- Flat roof drainage systems should be kept clear to minimize the risk of excess roof ponding in the event of subsequent heavy rainfall or melting.
- Large icicles can form on roof overhangs, but do not necessarily mean ice damming is occurring. Icicles overhanging doorways and walkways can be dangerous and should be carefully removed.
- All of the mentioned actions should only be performed by able-bodied adults, as the snow is heavy, and roofs and other surfaces may be slippery. Protective headgear and eye protection is recommended.

Region I
P.O. Box 116
365 East Street
Tewksbury, MA 01876
Tel: 978-328-1500 Fax: 978-851-8218

Region II
P.O. Box 54
12-I Rear Administration Road
Bridgewater, MA 02324-0054
Tel: 508-427-0400 Fax: 508-697-8869

Region III / IV
1002 Suffield Street
Agawam, MA 01001
Tel: 413-750-1400 Fax: 413-821-1599

- In many cases, roof ice dams can form causing water build-up, leading to interior damage. To minimize the risk of over-stressing a building roof due to accumulated or drifting snow.
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MEMA is the state agency charged with ensuring the state is prepared to withstand, respond to, and recover from all types of emergencies and disasters, including natural hazards, accidents, deliberate attacks, and technological and infrastructure failures. MEMA is committed to an all hazards approach to emergency management. By building and sustaining effective partnerships with federal, state and local government agencies, and with the private sector - - individuals, families, non-profits, and businesses - - MEMA ensures the Commonwealth's ability to rapidly recover from large and small disasters by assessing and mitigating threats and hazards, enhancing preparedness, coordinating response operations, and strengthening our capacity to rebuild and recover.

For additional information about MEMA, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Also, follow MEMA on *Twitter* at www.twitter.com/MassEMA; *Facebook* at www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA; and *YouTube* at www.youtube.com/MassachusettsEMA. *Massachusetts Alerts*: to receive emergency information on your smartphone, including severe weather alerts from the National Weather Service and emergency information from MEMA, download the *Massachusetts Alerts* free app. To learn more about *Massachusetts Alerts*, and for additional information on how to download the free app onto your smartphone, visit: www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp.

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