

# Roof Snow Load and Removal

Winter can be unforgiving; is your roof ready? Major snowstorms can result in building failures, the most hazardous of which are roof systems collapsing from excessive snow loading. Here are some tips to prevent that from happening to you.

## Pre-planning

- Conduct a pre-season roof inspection and vulnerability assessment and take care of any deficiencies identified.
- Formulate a response plan – will an in-house crew or outside contractor respond?
- If it's an in-house crew, confirm that you have an OSHA-compliant safety plan for roof work.
- If it's an outside contractor, get:
  - a certificate of insurance evidencing at least Workers Compensation and General Liability insurance; and
  - a signed hold harmless agreement.
- Identify and mark rooftop hazards (skylights, pipes, etc.).
- Know the designed snow load of the roof.

## Response Strategies

- Determine at what point snow removal should be initiated (only when the load exceeds the design, when there is more snow than normal, etc.).
- Once the decision to remove snow is made, act quickly before more snow comes or it becomes wet/heavy.
- Inspect drains, gutters, downspouts, and vents for snow or ice blockage.

## Removal

- Leave 2" of snow on the roof to prevent damage to the roof covering.
- Do not use mechanical snow removal equipment or sharp tools.
- Remove drifted snow first, then start the remaining removal from the center part of the roof.
- Do not stockpile snow on roof.
- Dispose of removed snow in designated areas on the ground.
- Keep snow away from building exits, fire escapes, drain downspouts, ventilation openings, and equipment.

## For more information

[http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/7d8c55d1c4f815edf3d7e7d1c120383f/FEMA957\\_Snowload\\_508.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/7d8c55d1c4f815edf3d7e7d1c120383f/FEMA957_Snowload_508.pdf)

