

Office of Risk Management

RISK ALERT

No. 2021-02

RE: Winter Storm Watch

January 30, 2021

The National Weather Service issued a Winter Storm Watch in effect from Monday morning, February 1, through Tuesday afternoon, February 2 for all of Massachusetts and northern and southern Rhode Island. Heavy snow is expected with total accumulations of six to 12 inches possible. Winds could gust as high as 35 mph.

A Winter Storm Watch means there is potential for significant snow, sleet or ice accumulations that may impact travel.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS

- **Closely monitor NOAA weather radio or other local news outlets** for official storm information and changes to the forecast.
- Some trees in our area may be more susceptible to wind damage. **Immediately inspect trees and bushes. Remove dead or rotting branches that could fall and cause injury or damage.**
- **Be prepared for potential power outages** as a result of downed power lines caused by storm activity. Have an emergency supply kit on hand, including water, flashlight, extra batteries, a first aid kit and non-perishable food.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage to people/property.

Roofs

If not cleared off, snow accumulations will add weight and stress to structures and contribute to leaky roofs once the snow begins to thaw. 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, please take into consideration the following tips:

- 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.
- Remove snow in layers uniformly across the roof to prevent unbalanced loads that might cause collapse. Avoid making snow piles on the roof during the removal process.
- 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.
- Use care with snow removal equipment (shovels, ice spaces, snow blowers) to prevent roof cover damage. It is not necessary to clean completely down to the roof surface as long as melting snow and water can freely flow to the drains.

- Because snow is heavy and roofs and other surfaces may be slippery, all of the abovementioned actions should only be performed by able-bodied adults. Protective headgear and eye protection is recommended.

Property Damage

If you experience property damage, immediately call the Office of Risk Management at 781-664-3990. For a list of service vendors, go to: <http://rcabrisk.org/vendors>

RCAB Contact List: <http://rcabrisk.org/contact>

For updates, go to: <https://www.boston.gov/>