How to prevent water damage from the spring thaw.



Trees and flowers are budding, the temperatures are finally above freezing – what's not to love about spring? Answer: The spring thaw. Melting snow and ice, plus spring rains, can all add up to water damage in your home. But if you follow these tips on how to prevent water damage, you can enjoy the beauty of spring without worrying about potential home repairs.

What you can do now to prevent water damage.

Even though spring is just around the corner, there are still some last-minute steps you can take to prevent water damage from the spring thaw.

- **Check your sump pump.** Make sure it's in good working order; have a professional check it for you if you're not sure. If you don't have a sump pump, plan to have one installed, especially if you live in a flood-prone area. Adding a battery-powered backup to your sump pump will keep it working during any power outages.
- **Consider adding backflow valves.** Large amounts of water entering the sewer system during flood conditions can cause sewer backups. Backflow valves, which can be installed on your basement sewer connections, automatically close to prevent sewage and water from entering your home.
- **Make sure gutters and downspouts are clear.** If you have a lot of snow and ice on your property, it's probably best to hire a professional to clear your gutters (ladder + ice = possible injuries). Make sure downspouts aren't blocked by any debris and consider adding extensions to channel water farther away from your home's foundation.
- **Remove valuables from your basement.** If you have items of great monetary or sentimental

value in your basement, store them elsewhere to avoid possible water damage. Electronics, artwork, important papers, and fabrics (such as clothing, expensive rugs, or stuffed animals) can all be ruined by excessive moisture and flooding.

What you can do this spring and summer to prepare for next year.

Some water damage prevention projects are difficult to tackle when snow and ice are in the way, so keep these tasks on your to-do list for spring and summer.

- **Keep exterior walls in good repair.** Inspect the exterior walls of your home for any cracks or rotting wood that could allow water into your home. Quality paint can also provide a barrier to moisture, so if you haven't had your house painted in a while, consider adding that to your list. Most experts recommend painting the exterior of your home every 5-10 years.
- **Have your roof inspected and repaired.** Missing shingles, cracks, or holes in your roof can allow water to enter your home, so regular maintenance is essential to prevent water damage.
- **Check the grading of your landscape.** Ideally, your yard should slope slightly downward from your home to encourage water to flow away from the foundation. If it doesn't, consider hiring a landscape professional to grade your yard or follow these tips to do it yourself.
- **Trim or remove trees close to your home.** Overhanging branches can cause roof damage in a storm, which can, in turn, lead to water damage. Trim any overhanging branches and consider removing trees that could fall on your roof, especially if they're in poor condition.

With a little prevention, you can view April showers as the promise of May flowers — not the threat of water damage. For more advice on keeping your home protected year-round, talk to a local, independent insurance agent.

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