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### **Addressing Ice Dams Can Save Homeowners Money and Energy**

*- Focus on Energy helps homeowners prevent ice dams, saving them money on energy costs and roof repairs -*

**MADISON, Wis. (Jan. 7, 2009)** — Wisconsin homeowners are in the depths of winter and many are starting to see the effects of the frigid temperatures and record snow levels in the form of ice dams — large icicles hanging from their roofs. Focus on Energy wants homeowners to know about the damage ice dams can cause to their homes, and more importantly what they can do to prevent them.

“It’s important for homeowners to know that ice dams are not just another inconvenience of winter,” said Sue Hanson, program manager for Focus on Energy’s Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program. “Ice dams are a symptom that something is wrong with their home’s insulation or air sealing. By not addressing the symptom, homeowners are risking damage to their roofs as well as ignoring energy inefficiencies in their home.”

#### **Understanding Ice Dams**

An ice dam is a ridge of ice developing at the edge of a roof which prevents melting snow from draining off the roof. The dam grows in size as it is fed by the melting snow above it. Ice dams are caused by non-uniform roof surface temperatures. Inadequate or incomplete insulation in the attic is an obvious reason for non-uniform roof surface temperatures. However, even if the attic is adequately insulated, warm air leaking through hidden pathways can cut the effectiveness of the insulation by 30 percent to 70 percent.

When ice dams build up along the eaves, they can force water back up under the shingles and even into the ceiling or wall inside the house. Water-stained ceilings and walls, peeling paint, sagging gutters, damaged plaster and shingles are the results. This can lead to costly repairs. In addition, homeowners may be paying unnecessarily high utility bills because of heat escaping into their attic.

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### **Addressing Ice Dams**

The most effective way to deal with ice dams is to prevent them from forming in the first place. Finding and sealing the air leaks that cause ice dams is a big task. For help, homeowners can contact Focus on Energy's Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program for a home energy evaluation. Evaluations are performed by partnering consultants who are experts in diagnosing and solving difficult problems, like ice dams.

"Preventing ice dams will not only save you money in the long run because your roof will last longer," added Hanson. "Addressing air leaks also ensures your insulation can work effectively, thereby making your home more comfortable, safe, durable and energy efficient."

To find out more about the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program, including names of consultants and qualified contractors who can work with you on preventing ice dams, visit [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com) or call (800) 762-7077.

### **About Focus on Energy**

Focus on Energy works with eligible Wisconsin residents and businesses to install cost effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Focus information, resources and financial incentives help to implement projects that otherwise would not be completed, or to complete projects sooner than scheduled. Its efforts help Wisconsin residents and businesses manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, protect our environment and control the state's growing demand for electricity and natural gas. For more information call (800) 762-7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com).

### **About the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program**

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR is one of the Focus on Energy Residential Programs. It is designed to provide owners of existing Wisconsin homes a cost effective way to reduce their energy bills and enhance the safety and comfort of their homes. To participate, a homeowner must have a comprehensive home evaluation and work completed by consultants and contractors partnering with the program. To date more than 4,500 whole house projects have been completed under the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program. For information, call (800) 762-7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com).

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