



Underwritten by The New Home  
Warranty Insurance (Canada) Corp.

301, 30 Springborough Blvd. SW  
Calgary, AB T3H 0N9

1 800 352 8240  
anhwp.com

# Attic Rain

During periods of extended cold weather, moisture from the living space or outside sources carried by air movement can accumulate on the underside of the roof sheathing and/or on the roof trusses. It may also occur on the attic side of the insulation, in or on the roof vents and on or around the soffits. The degree of frost accumulation is related to the relative humidity of the house air, the rate of air movement into the attic and the length of the cold spell. When the temperature rises above freezing, or the temperature rises and combined with an intensely sunny day, the frost or ice begin to melt faster than the attic's ventilation system can exhaust the accumulated moisture.

Whether or not this results in a water leakage into the living space varies with circumstances. Attics are designed to manage small amounts of moisture accumulation. Typically, when the frost or ice changes to liquid water and then to water vapour, it is absorbed into the air and is exhausted harmlessly by attic ventilation to the outside. It may be absorbed by the insulation or the framing and released slowly. It may pool on the polyethylene at the ceiling and evaporate harmlessly.

A homebuilder can minimize the indoor air from reaching the attic by ensuring the air and vapour barrier is as continuous as possible, however air leakage into the attic cannot be completely eliminated. Even a small leak can deposit a significant amount of moisture over a long cold spell if the relative humidity of the indoor air is high.

During these long cold spells, the homeowner can reduce the amount of attic frost by ensuring the humidity in the home is reduced by turning down the humidifier and using either the Heat Recovery Ventilator (HRV) or Principle ventilation fan (PVF). If an HRV is installed in the home, set the control to continuous operation; if there is a PVF, turn on the switch usually located near the thermostat that is labelled "Ventilation". Doing this also has the added benefit of reducing condensation on the interior surfaces of windows in the home.

However, occasionally, the water from melting frost accumulates faster than it can evaporate out of the attic. When it melts, it runs to an opening that leads to the interior of the home. It may appear as a wet spot on the inside of the ceiling below the attic or as a water leak around a window or at the bottom of a wall. It could also appear on the outside of the house as icicles or moisture on the cladding.

Where the integrity of the ceiling air/vapour barrier has not met the requirements of the *Construction Performance Guide for New Home Warranty* in Alberta, it may be considered a warrantable defect under the Building Envelope coverage of the *New Home Buyer Protection Act*. The homeowner is responsible to notify the Program and homebuilder if moisture or water leaks are observed as well as to take all reasonable steps to prevent further loss or damage to the home as a result of the water leak.

This would include placing containers under the leak to catch the water, drying wet areas and placing tape over light switches if water has accumulated or is dripping from lighting fixtures to ensure the switch cannot be turned on. The homeowner should not open the attic hatch in attempt to dry the attic space as this will allow a greater amount of humid air into the attic and exasperate the problem. Do not disturbed the ceiling in the location of the leak as doing so may reroute the water away from the area.

The Program is a warranty provider and not an emergency service company. When making a claim, the Program will prioritize the claim in the order received and will contact the homebuilder immediately. As claim volumes rise, assessment of your home may take up to 60 days. The Claims Department will notify homeowners of any issues and are available to answer questions Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm.