

## After the Storm

This time of the year, for most of the country, snow is a given. In fact, some places may see more than 100 inches a winter!

Whether you get just a few inches or 100-plus, it can be a challenge to manage the snow once it's finished falling. Here are a few suggestions from the experts:

### Shovel safety

**Shovel on empty.** Don't shovel after eating or while smoking. It's best to do some stretches before you start and go slowly.

**Keep it light.** Shovel only fresh, powdery snow, which is lighter. Also, push the snow aside rather than lift it. If you do lift it, use your legs, not your back.

**Know how far to go.** Take frequent breaks and pay attention to how your body is reacting. If you feel any dizziness or tightness in your chest, stop immediately. And don't shovel until exhaustion.

**Don't let the frost bite.** Know the signs of frostbite: numbness, white or grayish-yellow skin, firm or waxy skin. If you experience any of these, go into the house right away and soak in warm water.

Also know the signs of hypothermia, which include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech or drowsiness. For hypothermia, go inside and wrap your body in warm blankets, including your head and neck.

### Snow blower smarts

**Hands off.** Keep hands and feet away from all moving parts when using the blower.

**When you're in a jam.** Always stop the engine before trying to clear snow or debris from a clogged mower, and use a long stick to remove it—never your hands.

**Cord conscious.** If you're using an electric blower, be sure you always know where the power cord is.

**Keep it out.** Never run the blower in an enclosed area, which can emit carbon monoxide. And when you add fuel, do it outdoors and never when the machine is running.

### Snowy roof

**Bring in the pros.** It's important not to let a lot of snow accumulate on your home's roof because it can cause a collapse. It's best to hire a professional to remove the snow. Some signs of collapse include sagging, severe leaks, bends or ripples in the supports and cracks in the masonry.

**Rake it off.** If you opt to remove the snow yourself, use a non-metal snow rake. Start from the edge of the roof and work your way up. Note that snow coming down can fall on you, so stand back and rake only small amounts at a time.

You don't need to get it all off—just down to two or three inches. Doing more risks damaging the roof. Do not attempt to climb on the roof or use electric heating devices to remove snow or ice.

**Mind your head.** Wear protective headgear and goggles before attempting to take snow off your roof.

**Iced up and out.** Large icicles hanging over doorways and walkways can be dangerous; a cubic foot of ice weighs over 62 pounds. Consider knocking down icicles through windows using a broom stick.

While you may do the best job clearing the snow and ice, there's always the risk that someone may get hurt on your property. For times like these, umbrella coverage makes a lot of sense. An umbrella can protect you if someone is hurt on your property, sues you and you're faced with a big court settlement. Ask your agent how you can get this important coverage.

Sources: National Safety Council, [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov), [dc.gov](https://www.dc.gov), [maine.gov](https://www.maine.gov), Consumer Product Safety Commission

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