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From: Todd Carr, Building Official

Routt County Regional Building Department

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Subject: Roof Snow Load Safety Information

Dear Routt County Citizens,

This winter has brought significant snowfall to the Routt County area, and now we are beginning to see additional snowfall into March with high moisture content or mixed with rain as well. Our roofs although different than mountain terrain, can pose similar threats in terms of snow slides or ice break-offs from your roof edges. Additionally property owners should be aware of the value of Roof Snow Load their roofs were structurally constructed to support, and this will take owners reviewing their original drawings or contacting the professional that designed or constructed their building or home.

Routt County Building Department began reviewing Building Plans in 1975, and through that review process Routt County is considered a Case Study zone by Building Codes. This means that Routt County Building Department historically has provided Professionals and Property Owners with a set value of Ground Snow Load value per location, then the Professional or Owner uses the Ground Snow Load value to calculate their Roof Snow Load per square foot, this is the value of snow load the roof is constructed to hold. This value increases obviously based in geographic location and your property elevation as well, so areas and higher elevations that see significant higher amounts of snow would have a higher Ground Snow value than a property along the valley floor. Roof Snow Load designs can range from 50PSF up to 160PSF throughout Routt County, depending again on your location and elevation, so it's important for you to know your Roof Snow Load value.

As a property owner or property manager you should also be aware of the potential threat of snow slides, snow drifting over the roof edges, and ice build-up as well. As we begin to see more snow in March packed with moisture, or rain and higher temperatures this can cause snow or ice to break-off at the along the edges and fall to the ground or onto your walking surfaces along your building.

Routt County Regional Building Department

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The Routt County Building Department wanted to inform our citizens of these risks associated with the snowfall we have seen this season, and evaluate your roofs conditions and make smart decisions on mitigating any potential risks that may exist. These risks will strongly vary depending upon your location, roof style, roof pitch, and type of roofing materials as well, if you're in doubt please contact a professional to get their advice. Also it's important to consider what lies below your roof edge, is there a walking surface where you or the public travel daily, is there a parking area, or other areas where you or the public use on a daily basis. Please also check any paths of egress along your building, such as window wells or window openings leading from bedrooms, please maintain a clear path in these areas of Means of Egress in case an Emergency arises and you need to use this opening or pathway to escape.

Last, if you feel that mitigation needs to happen, please take extra safety precautions if you intend to remove any snow or ice from your roofs, this process can be extremely dangerous. You will want to ensure there are no vehicles or people below roof edges as you perform this work, ensure everyone knows to stay out of this work area, use proper equipment like a long roof rake that keeps you out of the pathway of snow or ice that will fall to the ground. Most important, if you intend to stand on your roof, please research proper safety measures on how to perform this work, ensure your tied off properly with safety equipment, ropes and harnesses to ensure your kept safe while performing this work. There are also plenty of local companies and professionals that specialize in providing this service for you and understand how to perform this work safely. Last, you must also be careful when removing the snow or ice not to damage your roofing materials, depending upon the type of materials you building may have, so research this as well and don't feel it's necessary to remove the snow or ice down to the top of the roofing material, your goal should be to mitigate the risk not completely remove all the snow or ice.

We appreciate your citizens taking time to review this article, but remember this can be extremely dangerous work and your safety and the public's safety should always come first, when in doubt contact a professional to assist you with any type of mitigation work.

Sincerely,



Todd Carr, Building Official

Routt County Regional Building Department