

# Snow and Ice Advisory

From the Healthy Environments Advance Learning Team (HEAL)  
Winter 2026



Thank you for your continued commitment to safe and well-maintained learning environments.



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Additional Resources:  
[HEAL's website](#)

*Advisory advice is general in nature and covers basic procedures applicable to some, but not all, properties susceptible to cold weather, snow, and ice. It does not purport to cover all possible conditions, perils, or hazards which may be found at a given location or facility, nor to provide complete and all-encompassing loss prevention advice. Other factors could contribute to a loss or prevent or mitigate a loss.*

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) School Building Authority's (SBA) Healthy Environments Advance Learning (HEAL) Team is issuing an advisory to remind Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) of the importance of monitoring roof conditions during and following significant snow and ice events. Excessive snow accumulation, drifting, and ice loading can create unsafe conditions that may compromise roof systems and pose risks to building occupants.

This guidance applies to all LEA-operated school facilities and is intended to support site-based decision-making using professional judgement and local conditions.

#### LEAs are encouraged to take the following actions:

- **Monitor snow accumulation and drifting on all school roofs**, especially flat or low slope areas, spots near rooftop equipment, roof drains, entry canopies, and other locations prone to drifting. Engage licensed engineers or experienced roofing contractors if snow loads appear excessive or any signs of structural distress emerge. Do not permit untrained personnel on roofs for snow removal; improper methods, uneven clearing, or damage to roof membranes can increase structural risk. All snow removal activities should be authorized and coordinated through facilities leadership.
- **Monitor building perimeters for hanging icicles and ice buildup**, especially along roof edges, gutters, and over paths of travel such as entrances, exits, sidewalks, loading areas, and drop-off zones. Where hazardous conditions are present, take appropriate precautions to safeguard occupants, including restricting access, establishing exclusion zones, posting warnings, and coordinating safe removal by qualified personnel.
- **Watch for warning signs**, including new or worsening leaks, ceiling deflection, unusual cracking or popping sounds, doors that suddenly bind, or visible structural movement. If any of these conditions are observed, immediately restrict access to affected areas and seek professional evaluation.
- **Review emergency and facilities response plans** to ensure roles, communication protocols, documentation expectations, and decision-making authority are clear during winter weather events, including after-hours or extended storm conditions.

HEAL emphasizes that safeguarding students, staff, and visitors must remain the top priority. Decisions regarding school operations, restricted access, or temporary closures should be informed by site-specific conditions and consultation with qualified professionals, and be documented as appropriate.

Please share this guidance with facilities, maintenance, and administrative staff, including school leaders responsible for daily operations.