



Division of Building Safety

1090 E. Watertower Street

Meridian, ID 83642

Phone: (208) 332-7155

Fax: (208) 855-2164

Email: SchoolSafety@dbs.idaho.gov



Winter Safety Alert

Date: January 9, 2017

To: Idaho School Superintendents

From: Chris Jensen, Division of Building Safety Administrator

Brian Armes, Idaho Office of School Safety and Security Manager

Re: The roof above your head

(Meridian) – As part of its mandate to ensure the safety of Idaho school buildings, the Division of Building Safety (DBS) and the Idaho Office of School Safety and Security advises school district administrators of factors that could endanger school buildings, students and staff. It is for this reason I pass along the following information.

Many times in past winters, Idaho schools have experienced significant damage to roof structures due to excessive snow and ice loading. Damage ranges from the weakening of roof structures even to the point of failure and collapse. We find the most vulnerable structures to be older buildings, gymnasiums and buildings with long, unsupported roof spans.

In this season of record snowfall and low temperatures, I strongly recommend you have your maintenance personnel examine the roof support structures in your buildings for signs of weakening or stress. If evidence of recent cracking, shifting, splitting elements of the roof system are found, please do not hesitate to contact this agency immediately at 1 800 955-3044. We would be happy to dispatch an inspector to perform a follow-up evaluation of the situation.

It is always wise to keep a close watch on snow accumulations on the roofs of your buildings. Your maintenance staff may see value in the results of several studies by the University of Idaho Civil Engineering Department that help determine expected snow loads in various areas of Idaho. The results of those studies, and an interactive map, can be found at the university's website here:

<http://www.lib.uidaho.edu/digital/idahosnow/> . The most recently available ground snow loads are in the 2015 report. Ground-to-roof conversion factors may be found in the 1986 report or you may employ the standards referenced on page 10 of the 2015 report.

If you have questions or would like further information, please feel free to contact this office directly.

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor

Chris Jensen
Administrator

Brian C. Armes
Manager