

Kate's Plumbing Priorities



Ice Dam's Angry Cousin – the Thaw.

Prepare now to mitigate basement misery later...

[UPDATE – VISIT OUR HOMEPAGE FOR VIDEO WITH NECN](#)

With 5-foot snow piles surrounding your home and 40-degree temperatures looming around the corner, water from melting snow has to go somewhere. It's time to turn your attention from roof raking and ice dam removal to your basement. Let's protect the items at our properties lowest point from destruction should a flood occur.

There is no one cure for keeping water out of your basement. A few years ago, when our region experienced a tremendous amount of rain in a short period of time at the start of the spring thaw, homeowners who had never seen flooding in over 50 years of home-ownership were contacting us regarding 6+ inches of water surrounding all their basements interior. At that time, the water was due to elevated water tables due to oversaturation of the ground. A scenario likely to repeat itself this year but instead of a period of heavy rain, it will be a result of us experiencing the second snowiest winter in Massachusetts history and record breaking snowfalls in an abbreviated timetable.

Your first line of defense should be walking your property both inside and out.

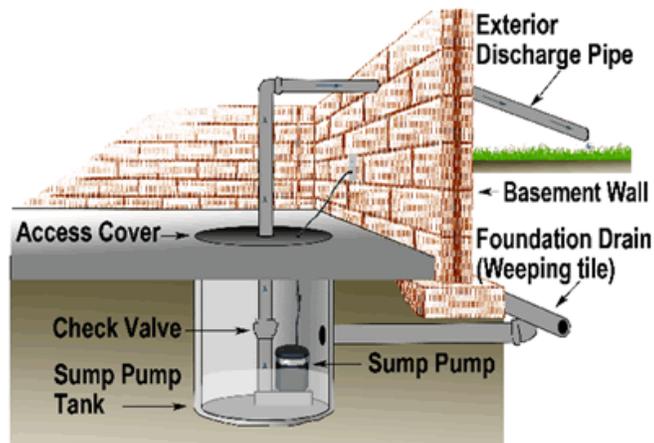
- Relocating the snow on your property. Since most don't have access to a private snow farm, work backwards from how you've been handling the snow to date. Start at your homes foundation and work your way toward the middle of the pile chipping away and relocating as much snow as far as possible to an area away from your foundation wall.
- Remove electronics or stored valuables from your basement. What you can't remove, lift up with water resistant framing or cinderblocks.
- Check the foundation walls for any "new" or overlooked cracking and patch it in. These spots can be considered compromised and will allow water in a higher water table scenario to follow the path of least resistance and enter your home if left untreated.
- Clear any remaining debris from fall cleanups from window wells, downspouts and gutters. This should include any ice that has formed where running water once was, leaves, branches, etc.

Have a sump pump? Test its operation at every level. Make sure the floats engage when water levels reach predetermined heights. We've been warned by numerous sources to make sure the dryer vents and heating system exhaust and intake pipes are kept clear of snow and ice. Have you checked your sump pump discharge line? If not, well, now's your chance. Make sure the

water has a clear path to the street. The iceberg of a snowbank you created to see your driveway/sidewalk has probably frozen at the base, does your sump pump drain terminate into that pile? If so, you've got some work to do to remove the possibility of a backup. Check valves work under normal conditions but expunging the amount of water that could be created when all this snow melts in the coming weeks and having it bounce back because the termination point is into an ice sculpture you created could cause older checks to break down which would then cause your basement to flood.

Don't have a sump pump, have you considered one? Maybe this weekend won't be the epic melt that some are predicting. Be certain, it's coming. Between the snow and ice melting, and the water table rising, we are in for a soggy few months ahead. Water will find a crack or low point and start to pool if not carefully monitored. We have the tools and knowledge to help you determine if and where to install one. They can save the holiday decorations, treadmill or media room from colossal disaster.

When you are on a break from snow and ice, think about your next step and how you'd like to move forward. Here is a simple diagram from Google Images that explains how a sump pump works. It's best to have one installed at a point where you think water is likely to impact your home.



We hope you survive the melt after this crazy winter. Should water become an issue, please contact your trusted, licensed and insured plumbing specialist for more details on how to protect your home.

About McDonnell Plumbing:

McDonnell Plumbing & Heating, Inc. of Needham MA has been servicing Boston, and metro-west area since 1984. Our primary focus is residential plumbing and heating needs. If you have cutting edge plumbing amenities or fixtures that date back a 100 years, we've got the people and experience to help you find the right plumbing and heating solutions for your home or business. To learn more about McDonnell Plumbing & Heating's adventures, and to receive tips and advice, like us on facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/McDonnell-Plumbing-Heating-Inc/47347112642>) or bookmark our website (<http://www.mcdonnellplumbing.com>) .

About Kate (McDonnell) Tynan:

An unofficial member of the McDonnell Team since 1976, Kate officially joined the family business in 2005 after working in Financial Services and Communications sectors. Groomed by founder Frank McDonnell, Kate works with clients in designing, diagnosing and repairing plumbing and heating challenges. Outside of McDonnell Plumbing, Kate contributes her energies in trade and business organizations including leadership positions as PHCC of MA, and BNI's Network Exchange. A graduate of Saint Anselm College, Kate lives in West Roxbury with her husband Sean, and daughter Caroline.