

Common Heat Tape Installation Mistakes

1. It Covers the Eave but Misses the Valleys and Rakes

Running cable along eaves is only part of a complete system. Valleys collect meltwater where two roof planes meet, accelerating ice buildup. Rakes are exposed to wind and cold, creating separate problem areas. A complete layout addresses the full roofline.



2. It Stops at the Roofline Instead of Running Through the Gutters

Water doesn't stop at the roof edge, it drains through gutters and downspouts. Meltwater hitting a frozen gutter has nowhere to go, pooling and adding damaging ice weight to gutters and fascia boards. A complete system runs heat cable through the full drainage path.



3. It Runs in a Straight Line Instead of a Zigzag Pattern

A single straight cable protects only a narrow line, meltwater can freeze on cold shingles just uphill of the cable, moving the ice dam higher up the roof rather than eliminating it. A zigzag pattern creates a wider band of warmth that keeps meltwater moving toward the eave and gutter.



4. It Skips Self-Regulating Cable and Proper Controls

Basic heat cable runs constantly or requires manual plug-in management, risking higher energy costs or forgotten activation, which allows ice dams to form. Self-regulating cable adjusts output as temperatures change and pairs with automatic controls for hands-free protection.



5. It Leaves the Downspouts Unprotected

The downspout transition is one of the most stressed points in a heat tape system, sharp bends and repeated expansion wear down the cable's coating over time. Cable guards protect these high-stress points and extend system life across multiple winters.



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