A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR ICE STORM RECOVERY

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT? WE DO.™

ServiceMASTER Restore®

WE SET THE STANDARD IN SETTING THINGS RIGHT.

Ice storms can be deceptively destructive. They arrive quietly but leave behind extensive damage — from downed trees and power lines to collapsed roofs, burst pipes, and water intrusion. At ServiceMaster Restore, we understand the unique challenges that come with cold-weather disasters. With 70+ years of experience providing superior restoration services, we set the standard for setting things right. We provide expert guidance and support throughout the entire process to help ease any confusion and develop the right solutions for your specific needs.

Communication is vital throughout the process, so we've provided a helpful contact list to save you time and stress. Be sure to keep this information handy.

ServiceMaster Restore business name

_____

ServiceMaster Restore contact & phone number

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_____

ServiceMaster Restore e-mail address

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Insurance Agent name & phone number

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Insurance Claim Representative name & phone number

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Insurance Claim number

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Other phone numbers

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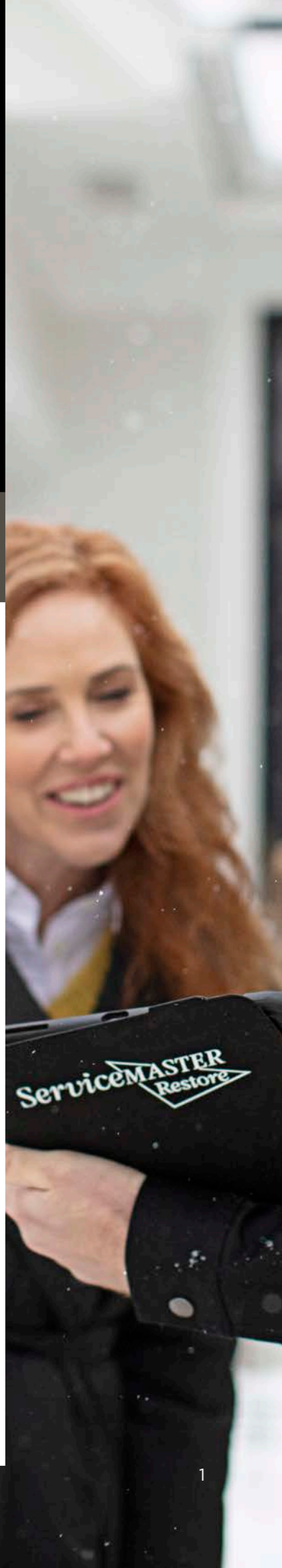


70+

With more than 70 years of experience in cleaning and restoration, we set the standard for setting things right.

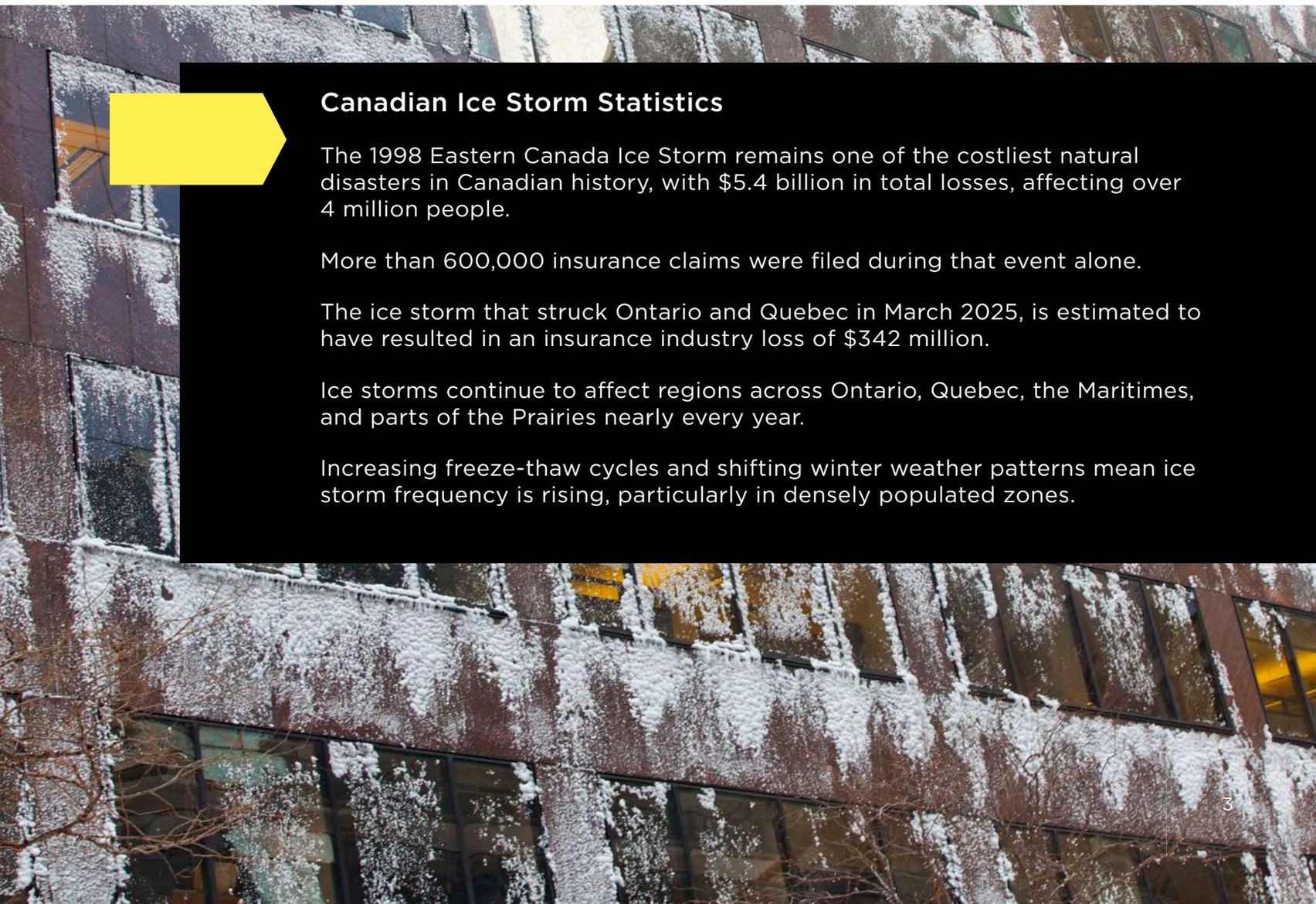
UNDERSTANDING ICE STORM DAMAGE

Ice storms are among the most dangerous and disruptive winter weather events in Canada. Unlike blizzards or high-wind storms, the damage from an ice storm builds silently — coating trees, power lines, roofs, and roadways in heavy layers of freezing rain. This weight can lead to sudden collapses, prolonged outages, and serious structural compromise.

The most common types of ice storm damage include:

- Roof collapse or sagging under ice load
- Burst water lines from freezing temperatures or power loss
- Roof, siding, soffit or window damage from falling trees or limbs or wind-driven ice
- Water intrusion from ice dams at rooflines and gutters
- Interior water damage from pipe leaks or ceiling collapse
- Smoke and fire damage caused by unsafe heating during outages
- Contamination from backflow or sewage exposure due to system failures

Whether your structure is residential or commercial, ice storm damage often affects multiple systems at once — and immediate professional assessment is key to limiting secondary loss.



Canadian Ice Storm Statistics

The 1998 Eastern Canada Ice Storm remains one of the costliest natural disasters in Canadian history, with $5.4 billion in total losses, affecting over 4 million people.

More than 600,000 insurance claims were filed during that event alone.

The ice storm that struck Ontario and Quebec in March 2025, is estimated to have resulted in an insurance industry loss of $342 million.

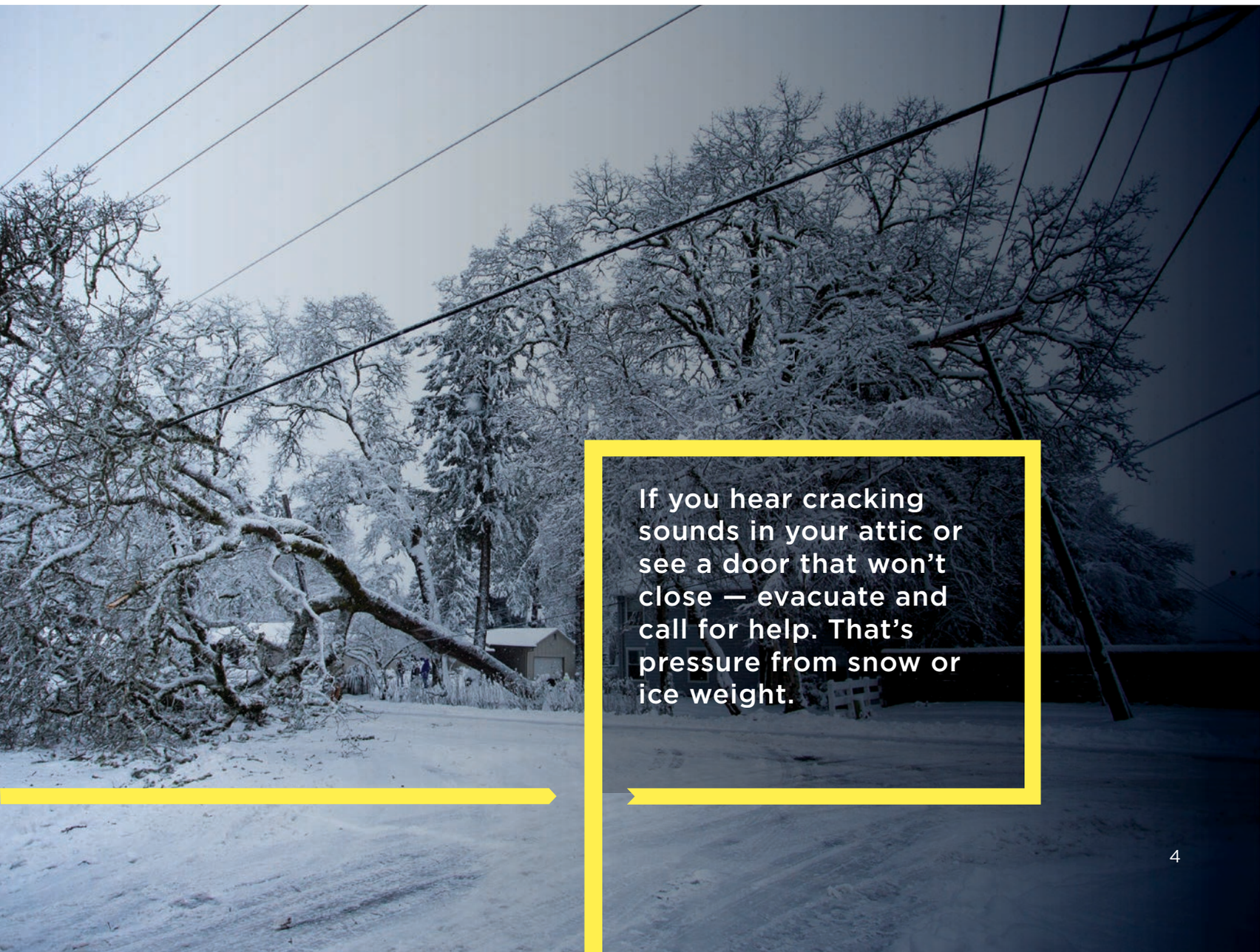
Ice storms continue to affect regions across Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes, and parts of the Prairies nearly every year.

Increasing freeze-thaw cycles and shifting winter weather patterns mean ice storm frequency is rising, particularly in densely populated zones.

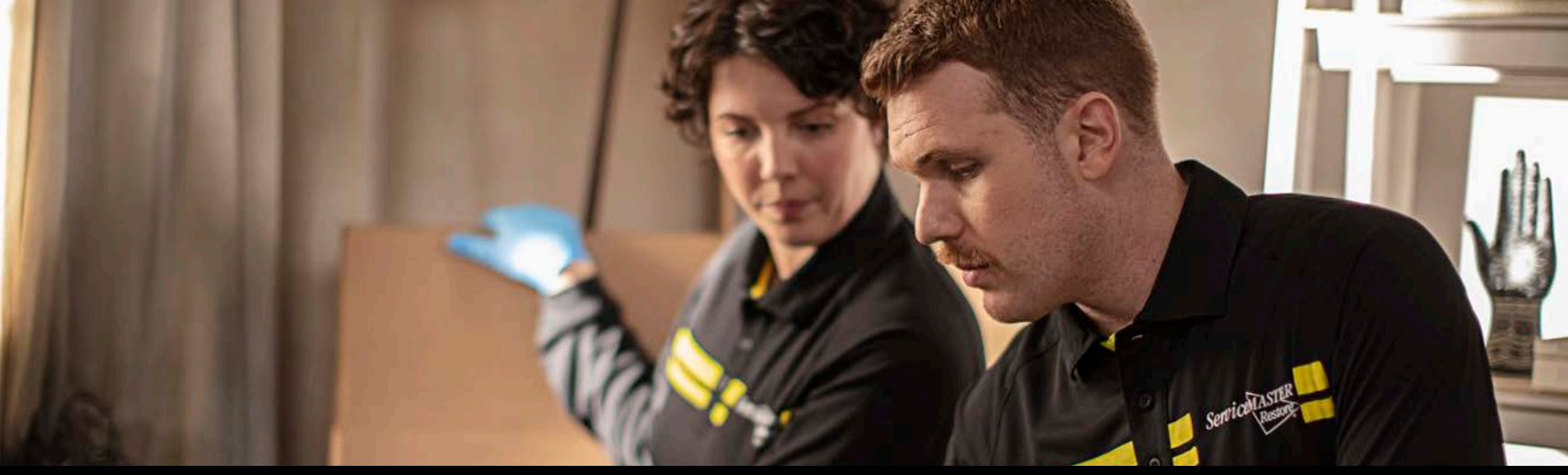
UNDERSTANDING ICE STORM DAMAGE

Hazards to Watch For After an Ice Storm

HAZARD	WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR
Roof sag or collapse	Cracks in ceilings, sagging drywall, stuck doors
Burst pipes	Water stains, low pressure, pooling or damp floors
Ice damming	Ceiling leaks near exterior walls, roofline drips
Power outage damage	Electrical failure, frozen HVAC or fire systems
Carbon monoxide buildup	From improper use of heaters or generators indoors
Falling debris	Broken limbs, downed lines, collapsed sheds or carports



If you hear cracking sounds in your attic or see a door that won't close — evacuate and call for help. That's pressure from snow or ice weight.



UNDERSTANDING THE RESTORATION PROCESS

Ice storm recovery often involves overlapping issues: structural integrity, burst pipes, water damage, HVAC failure, and contents contamination — all within freezing or unstable environments. Fast, professional response is essential to prevent further loss and protect both property and people.

ServiceMaster Restore uses a specialized restoration process tailored to the unique challenges of ice storm recovery. Here is what you should expect for the restoration process:

1. Emergency Response & Site Safety Assessment

- Immediate dispatch of winter-trained restoration professionals
- Identification of hazards: roof sag, electrical hazards, frozen systems
- Coordination with power utilities, fire officials, or municipal inspectors
- Initial damage documentation for structural engineers, insurance and claims support

2. Structural Stabilization & Temporary Services

- Roof tarping and shoring to prevent collapse under ice or snow load
- Board-up of broken windows or compromised entry points
- Temporary heat setup if HVAC or electricity is out
- Deployment of drying and air-scrubbing equipment (as needed)
- Water shut-off if active leaks or burst pipes are found

3. Water Extraction & Drying

- Removal of water from burst pipes, melted ice, or ceiling leaks
- Drying of affected floors, walls, ceilings, and structural elements
- Application of antifungal/microbial treatments
- Monitoring of temperature, humidity, and moisture content

UNDERSTANDING THE RESTORATION PROCESS

4. Contents Restoration & Packout (See next section for details)

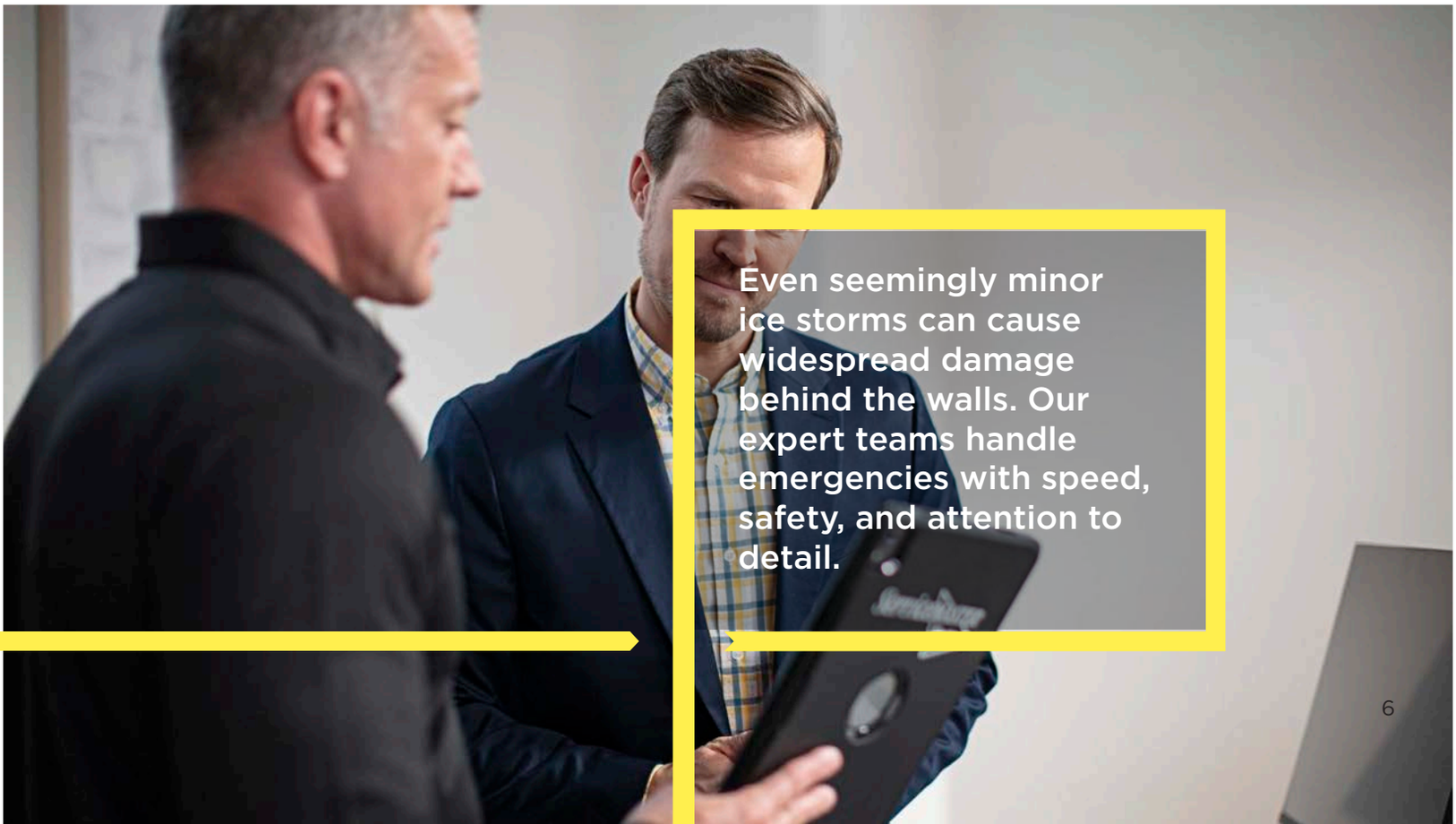
- Inventory of all affected contents
- Cleaning, deordorization and restoration of textiles, electronics, documents, and product inventory
- Secure storage of salvageable items

5. Plumbing & System Restoration

- Repair or replacement of burst or frozen water lines
- Inspection and repair of HVAC, electrical, and alarm systems
- Restoration of fire suppression or building management systems (if applicable)

6. Reconstruction & Rebuilding

- Licensed trades complete structural repairs or rebuild as needed
- Replacement of drywall, insulation, ceilings, and flooring
- Rebuilding of damaged framing or roof structures
- Window, siding, and gutter repairs
- Full interior rebuild for residential and commercial properties
- Final inspection to ensure compliance with building codes and restoration scope



RESTORING YOUR PROPERTY

Ice storms may pass quickly, but the damage they leave behind can escalate fast if not addressed properly. From roof sag to burst pipes and damaged HVAC systems, every hour counts. ServiceMaster Restore provides full-service emergency and restoration support to help stabilize and recover both homes and commercial properties in freezing conditions.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Our 24/7 response teams are trained to work in subzero environments to deliver critical services, including:

- Structural stabilization for sagging or ice-loaded roofs
- Temporary heat setup for properties with damaged HVAC systems
- Tarping and board-up of roof openings, broken windows, or ice-damaged siding
- Water shut-off and plumbing isolation if frozen or burst pipes are detected
- Moisture containment, emergency drying to stop microbial growth and mould and bacterial treatment in water-exposed areas
- Clear documentation and reporting for insurance providers

Emergency mitigation helps contain the problem so it doesn't escalate while you wait for rebuild planning or claim approvals.

RESTORATION SERVICES

Once the site is stabilized, our team manages the restoration from start to finish, including:

- Water extraction and thorough structural drying
- Repair or replacement of burst pipes, damaged wiring or HVAC components
- Restoration of insulation, drywall, and ceilings after roof or pipe leaks
- Rebuild services for collapsed or structurally compromised areas of your home or building
- Fire or smoke restoration if heating systems or temporary heat sources failed

CONTENTS RESTORATION

Cold temperatures, moisture, and contaminants can affect the contents of your home or business—even in areas that seem untouched. Our contents recovery services include:

- Professional cleaning and deodorization of textiles and soft goods
- Drying and restoration of electronics, appliances, and business equipment
- Document and photo recovery using freeze-drying and anti-mould techniques
- Inventory and itemized reports for insurance claims

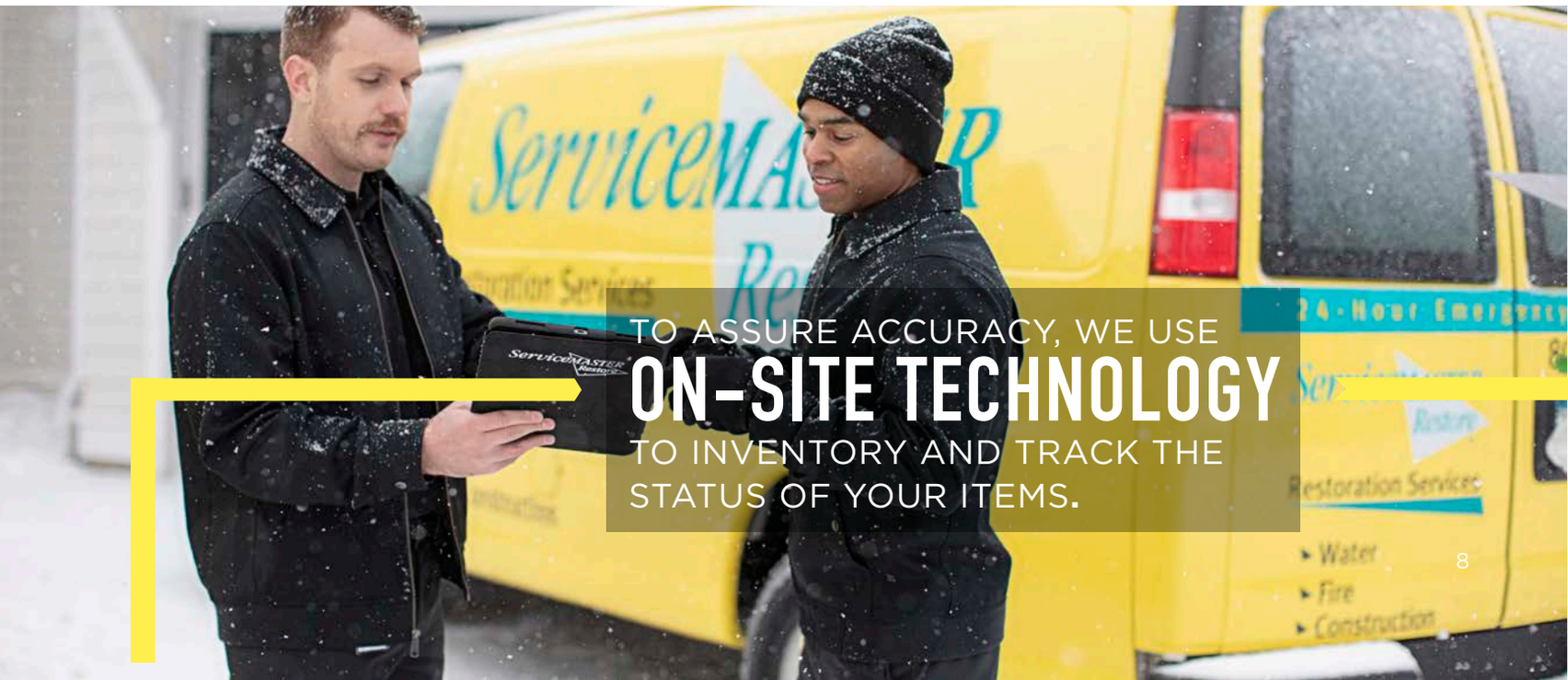
All items are tracked in an inventory management system and assessed for cleaning, storage, or replacement.

PACKOUT SERVICES

If your property is unsafe or undergoing major repairs, we provide complete packout services.

- Each room, office or area is inventoried with labeled packing
- Safe transportation of salvageable contents to our facility
- Cleaning, deodorizing, and secure storage until restoration is complete
- Return and reinstallation when your property is ready

For commercial clients, we also coordinate equipment shutdown, restoration, and reinstallation, ensuring minimal business interruption.



TIPS: FASTER & SAFER RECOVERY

After an ice storm, damage can develop slowly and dangerously — from collapsing ceilings to silent water leaks behind walls. Acting quickly and wisely is key to minimizing loss and speeding up recovery.

1. Don't Trust Appearances

Ice and snow may look stable but can weigh thousands of pounds. Roofs may sag, attic supports may shift, and limbs may still fall days after the storm. Avoid walking under trees or inspecting your own roof without proper safety equipment.

2. Document All Damage — Inside and Out

Take photos of water stains, fallen limbs, burst pipes, collapsed ceilings, damaged furniture, and anything that may require repair or replacement. Even subtle signs (like a door that won't close) can signal serious problems.

3. Call Your Insurance Provider Promptly

Even if you're still assessing the full extent of damage, notify your insurer as early as possible to initiate your claim and schedule an adjuster visit.

4. Keep Track of All Restoration-Related Costs

Save receipts for:

- Temporary heating
- Plumbing services
- Hotel stays or meals (if evacuated)
- Emergency repairs or cleanup supplies

These may be reimbursed under Additional Living Expenses (ALE) or commercial business interruption coverage.

5. Never Use Outdoor Heat Sources Indoors

Grills, propane heaters, or generators can cause deadly carbon monoxide poisoning if used inside or too close to the property. Always follow manufacturer guidelines and keep heating systems ventilated.

6. Care for Yourself as Well as Your Property

Winter storms are physically and emotionally draining. You may face uncertainty, discomfort, or prolonged displacement. Take things one step at a time — and lean on restoration professionals to guide you through the process.

Even a thin layer of ice can push your roof or pipes past their limit. If something seems off — assume it's a problem and call for help.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ICE STORMS

Q **There wasn't a flood at my property, but I found water damage after the ice melted. Is that covered?**

A Possibly. If the damage was caused by a sudden event — like ice damming, burst pipes, or a roof compromised by storm weight — most home and commercial insurance policies cover it. Contact your insurer for specific policy terms.

Q **What are signs of roof stress or collapse risk after an ice storm?**

A Warning signs include:

- Cracks in interior walls or ceilings
- Sticking doors or windows
- Visible bowing of ceiling drywall
- Creaking or popping sounds in the attic

Evacuate immediately if you suspect structural instability and call a professional.

Q **What causes ice dams, and how do they lead to water damage?**

A Ice dams form when heat from the attic melts snow on the roof, which then refreezes at the eaves. Water pools behind the dam and can leak into walls, ceilings, and insulation. It's one of the most common sources of post-storm damage.

Q **If my pipes froze but didn't burst, do I still need to worry?**

A Yes. Pipes weakened by freezing are more likely to burst later — often when the water is turned back on or temperatures rise. It's best to have a plumber inspect the system and a technician check for hidden moisture.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT

Q **Can you clean items that were exposed to water or extreme cold?**

A Yes. Many textiles, electronics, and documents can be professionally restored — especially if treated promptly. We evaluate, clean, and securely store salvageable items off-site until restoration is complete.

Q **What if my contents are damaged beyond repair?**

A We provide detailed inventories and photographic documentation to help your insurance provider validate replacement costs and finalize your claim.

RECONSTRUCTION

Q **Do you handle repairs like drywall, ceilings, and roofing?**

A Absolutely. ServiceMaster Restore offers full structural restoration — including insulation, ceilings, flooring, HVAC systems, and more. We also coordinate with insurance to align scope and coverage.

Q **Can I upgrade parts of my home or business during the rebuild?**

A Yes. Insurance covers "like-for-like" restoration, but you can choose to upgrade materials or layouts. Our team will guide you through pricing and integration options.

Q **How long does restoration take after an ice storm?**

A Emergency drying may take several days; full reconstruction can take weeks to months depending on supply chain delays and claim processing. We provide a clear schedule and keep you informed at every phase.

FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

Ice storms can be unpredictable and costly. The following resources offer helpful tools and information to guide both homeowners and businesses through recovery and future preparedness.

Residential Resources

ServiceMaster Restore – Ice Storm Damage Services
Full-spectrum support for emergency response, water mitigation, structural repair, and contents restoration.
https://servicemasterrestore.ca/homeowner

GetPrepared.ca – Winter Emergency Planning
Official Government of Canada resource for cold-weather readiness, power outage tips, and storm checklists.
https://www.getprepared.gc.ca

Insurance Bureau of Canada – Winter Weather Damage Coverage
Details on what typical homeowner policies cover for burst pipes, roof collapse, and ice damage.
https://www.ibc.ca/on/disaster/winter-weather

Hydro One – Outage & Generator Safety Tips
Best practices for using backup power safely during prolonged outages.
https://www.hydroone.com/power-outages-and-safety

Commercial Resources

ServiceMaster Restore – Commercial Winter Disaster Response
Customized services for commercial clients, including tenant support, critical systems restoration, and contents management.
https://servicemasterrestore.ca/business and https://www.srmcat.ca/

Public Safety Canada – Business Continuity Planning Toolkit
Templates and tools to build a winter weather disaster recovery plan for your organization.
https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca

Environment Canada – Ice Storm Forecasts and Warnings
Access to real-time freezing rain alerts and severe weather outlooks.
https://weather.gc.ca

WATER

FIRE

MOULD

RECONSTRUCTION

ServiceMASTER Restore®

ServiceMasterRestore.ca

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franchises or corporate-owned branches. Prices and services may vary by location.

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