



Why Gutters Are Important

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You don't think much about gutters until they are dumping water on your head, do you? Gutters serve many important purposes, not just to keep you dry as you search for your house key. Knowing this, you can avoid many big problems with your home if you keep your gutters flowing smoothly.

What do gutters do for me?

1. Gutters help water flow away from your foundation. Without gutters, all of the rainwater would pour down the sides of your house and create a constant flow of water along your foundation. This is a recipe for shifting soil, foundation cracks and flooded basements. Bad news.
2. Gutters keep water from flowing across the siding, brick, exterior trim and paint on your house. With excessive water flowing across these surfaces, you introduce more opportunities for leaks, erosion, mold and water staining.
3. Gutters carry water away from driveways, entryways and other non-pervious surfaces. When water pours onto these areas in excess, it has nowhere to go, so it pools up and flows against exterior garage doors and entryway doors. Significant water build-up against doors causes doors to deteriorate quickly. Also, you get water in your garage!

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4. Gutter downspouts can direct water to areas where soil erosion is not a concern. Patios, porches and decks can all be affected if too much water is directed around them consistently. Like with your foundation, washing away too much soil can cause shifting, cracking and sinking. These are all very costly to fix!

Okay, my gutters do a lot. What are some things I need to do to maintain them?

1. The most obvious is to keep them clean of debris (leaves, granules, sticks). Check them frequently and keep them clear.
2. Look for the gutter spikes pulling out. These support your gutters and keep them from falling. If some spikes are consistently coming out, there are replacement spikes that screw in that can help.
3. Inspect downspouts. If there are any loose connections or areas where they are no longer attached to the house, this should be repaired. Also, inspect the area where the downspout ejects. There should be a splash guard here to avoid digging a water trench in the grass.

How often should I check my gutters?

There's no easy answer because it depends. It can't hurt to check them more frequently than not. Some factors that can increase how often you should check them:

- 1. Proximity to trees.** Roofs within 10 feet of trees should be checked twice per year, minimum.
- 2. Type of trees.** Deciduous vs. evergreen. Deciduous are the type that lose their leaves annually during fall, so these increase the frequency of checking/cleaning.
- 3. Roof slope.** Low sloped roofs may require more cleaning.

Some people think that roofs with no trees nearby require no cleaning. This is not true. Roofs will deposit granules in the water as it runs down, cottonwood tree seeds can float for miles and other debris can wind up in your gutter even if none is readily obvious. Check your gutters!

What about gutter protection systems?

There are many wonderful products and some not so good ones. Gutter guards/shields/helmets do not fix every problem and some create new ones, such as building up the debris on the roof instead of inside the gutter. Some can contribute to ice damming if it's already a problem. Also, during heavy rain, some gutter protection systems can limit flow causing your

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entire gutter system to miss catching the rainwater! The point here is, there is no one-size-fits-all solution; a roofing and gutter systems professional should be consulted to advise on whether a gutter protection system makes sense for your particular situation.

This should be a great start to understanding what your gutters do and how they can best be maintained. If you have any questions about your gutters or would like some advice on replacing them, contact Pro Home Improvement at 888-776-1998.



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