



Home Protection: Gutters and Downspouts

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The recent abrupt introduction to spring in Michigan has brought us steady rainfall. You may have noticed your gutters overflowing or leaks occurring around your house, which can be caused by any myriad of gutter issues, including clogging or damage. But, what occurs if the rain water makes it into the gutter safely and through the downspout? Is there any threat to your home at this point?

Your basement, crawlspace or foundation can still be damaged by rain water even if your gutters are flowing correctly.

Helping Downspouts protect Your Foundation

One of the main functions of a gutter system is to carry rainwater away from your home safely. Clear and flowing gutters are the first step. But if you don't carry the water away to a good location, you may still be in trouble. Here are 3 main tips for ensuring you keep a solid foundation and a dry basement.

- 1. Splash guard** – Newer homes may have underground seepage lines that help direct the water safely away from your home, but if you have an older home, you may have noticed splash guards. These are the plastic or concrete trays that help redirect water from its downward trajectory to out into your lawn. The consistent flow of a large volume of water can erode your yard and it will eventually find your foundation. Shifting, damaged or wet foundations can be a costly fix.

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- 2. Not enough downspouts** – Rainwater travels along the gutter before finding a place to travel downward. Without an adequate number of downspouts, the water volume will build up in the gutter, weighing it down, causing damage to your gutters. Excess weight will also lead to failing hangers and roof damage.
- 3. Downspout ejection placement** – If rainwater is ejected onto a paved surface, ensure the pitch is away from your home. If it is not, relocate or elongate the downspout so that it can be moved away safely. Water that flows toward your foundation will eventually lead to shifting, wetness or mold – all of which are huge headaches and expensive to repair.

Saving Money with Rain Barrels

One method of saving money on your city water bill (you'll have to check with your local municipality) is to install rainwater barrels. This is also a greener way to water lawns, landscapes and gardens.

How Does it Work?

You pay a fee to your city for the stormwater service. When you create impervious surfaces, you create an excess flow of water. An impervious surface is a roof, driveway or other area where water can no longer seep into the earth without help. Your stormwater fee is based on the square footage of all of your impervious surfaces combined.

If you redirect rainwater into a barrel, you can deduct the area of roof that you are collecting from out of your stormwater bill.

There is also the obvious benefit of not using water that you paid for to water your landscape – that savings can be considered as well.

How Much Can I Save?

In Ann Arbor, for anything up to 2,187 square feet, you pay \$16 per quarter for the stormwater your home contributes to the local storm drain load. If you install a rain barrel, you can save up to \$2.30 per quarter (for more information, google 'your city + storm water fee').

Now you'll see that it's not a large sum of money, but it is an incentive to try and divert rainwater away from the storm drains which eventually erode our local watersheds.

If you only use rainwater to water landscapes, you can save a significant amount of money that way as well, up to \$9.00 per 750 gallons in avoided costs.

Some estimates say that a 100 foot x 100 foot lawn will use 6,230 gallons every time you run the sprinkler! That can be a \$75 daily charge and a huge impact to our fresh water supply if everyone in your city does the same, every day!

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If you have questions about gutters, downspout placement or other issues with your the exterior of your home, please call the Pros at Pro Home Improvement at 888-776-1998 or request an appointment.



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