



## MAINTAINING YOUR GUTTERS

An inspection of the gutter system should be a mandatory inclusion in a homeowner's routine home maintenance schedule. Ideally, a gutter inspection should be performed twice a year, once in the fall before the cold winter months, and again before the heavy rains of spring. The gutter system plays a very important part in managing the water run-off around the home. Poor or non-existing water run-off management systems through the use of gutters tend to be the primary cause behind water problems in the basement, as excess water is not properly shed away from the home.

During the hard hit months of winter and spring, the gutters on a home endure freezing temperatures, snow buildup, ice formation which then leads directly into excessive spring runoff from melting snow and heavy rains. In order to ensure that the gutters are able to appropriately shed water away from the home during these times, it is important to keep them well-maintained and free of debris.

### Safety Tips for Inspecting Gutters

As always remember to take caution when working on or inspecting your gutters. Unlike inspecting and maintaining other sections of your home's exterior, 90% of gutter work is done from a ladder.

#### Remember to:

- Always make sure that your ladder is on level ground and stable.
- Ask for help from a spouse, friend or neighbor to hold the ladder for you.
- Call a [Professional Gutter Service](#) provider if you feel uncomfortable doing the work yourself.

## Tips for Inspecting Gutters

**Cleaning Gutters:** In order for gutters to properly do the job for which they are intended, removing debris like leaves, sticks and dirt from the gutters and downspouts should be performed twice a year along with an overall inspection. Clogged gutters can lead to overflows in heavy spring rains and ice buildup in the winter months. Either of which can lead to gutter damage or to potential water intrusion problems.

**Check for pooling water:** If the gutters are free from debris, and still have water pooling or otherwise not draining properly in any section, this may be a sign of damaged gutter hangers or poor installation. Check that all gutter hangers are attached correctly and are not bent. Missing gutter clips are a common occurrence and can easily be replaced. If all gutter fasteners are there, check to make sure that the length of gutter is pitched downward toward the downspout. In general, a length of gutter should fall one inch for every 15 to 20 foot span and should be adjusted accordingly.

**Sagging Gutters:** Sagging sections of gutter around the home are most likely caused by bent, broken or missing gutter hangers. Gutter hangers are inexpensive and fairly easy to replace. Repairing or replacing them should be done as soon as possible to help support the added weight of heavy spring rain or the snow of winter.

**Gutter Apron:** Is rainwater dripping down between the gutter and the fascia? If so, your gutters may not have had gutter apron installed when they were put on. Gutter Apron is an 'L' shaped piece of metal flashing, nailed to the roof decking just under the edge of the shingles, which drops down into the gutter. Gutter apron ensures that rainwater coming from the roof is routed appropriately directly into the gutter and not able to sneak behind it. If not installed, water that seeps behind the gutter can cause fascia damage and limit the effectiveness of the gutter system.

**Holes & Cracks in Gutters:** Inspect the gutters for any holes or cracks that may need to be repaired. Holes or cracks in the gutters can typically be repaired by adhering a patch of the same or similar material, to the damaged spot.

**Make Sure All Connections Are Secure:** When doing your gutter inspection check to make sure that all the connections, where gutter lengths are connected, gutter meets downspout, or sections of downspout, are fastened together tightly. Check for broken or missing rivets, which if found, should be drilled and replaced.

**Make Sure Gutter System is fastened to the Home Securely:** Check that all downspout fasteners, where downspouts are fastened to the siding or exterior elevations home, are secure. If a section of downspout is torn off due to wind, heavy snow, or ice because of a loose or missing fastener, it may not only damage the gutter beyond repair, it may also cause unnecessary collateral damage to the siding.