

Effective Roof Drainage

eNewsletter Homeowner Tips

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Winter weather can be harsh on a house. Making sure the roof drainage system is in good shape will help minimize problems during the winter and can prevent water intrusion into your home.

Implications of Poor Drainage Systems

A poor draining gutter and downspout system can contribute to water damage during the winter that results from ice dams. As roof runoff from melting snow backs up and re-freezes at the gutter, ice dams can occur. The implication is water leakage through the roof into the soffit, fascia and walls.

Beyond preventing water penetration of an eave system, gutters and downspouts have two major functions. First, they protect the walls of a building from damage and second, can prevent localized erosion at ground level caused by unrestricted runoff. But probably the most important function is their contribution toward ensuring a dry basement.



Clogged gutters create problems

Inspect and Clean

Be proactive during the fall season to remedy problems caused by clogged gutters and downspouts. You can either hire a qualified contractor to clean gutters or do it yourself. If you choose to clean the gutters yourself, do it safely.

First, inspect the gutter system from the ground for rust, split seams, detached downspouts, missing extensions, and proper (1:200) slope. Next, determine if you have sufficient downspouts for proper drainage. As a general rule, a downspout should be provided for every forty feet of gutters. Now you're ready to inspect from above the gutter and clear them from debris.

In addition to a stable ladder, you will need a bungee cord to tie off the top of the ladder for your personal safety, a bucket, and a small garden trowel to remove the debris. Using the bungee cord, secure the ladder to the gutter, hang the bucket on the ladder, then, simply scoop the debris out into the bucket. When it becomes full, dump the bucket and reuse it.

When free from debris, flush your gutters thoroughly by using a garden hose to eliminate any remaining dirt or debris. While filling the gutters with water, check for leaks. Once dry, seal any leaking cracks, seams or small holes with a durable sealant labeled for metal.

+ SAFETY NOTE:

Always use safe methods and other protective practices while cleaning and performing maintenance on your roof drainage system. As these are general guidelines, you should always consult with qualified contractors.

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