MAJOR RAIN GUTTER PRODUCTS

The SpoutOff Gutter Product Guide
THE DILEMMA

KNOWING YOUR RAIN GUTTERS WORK EVERY TIME IT RAINS

There are many rain gutter products on the market today that claim to keep gutters clear of debris and working properly when it rains. We are going to discuss the most common gutter alternatives.

[All the following situations assume gutters are the correct size and installed properly]

Gutters and Downspouts (Downspouts are also known as Leaders) only:

As long as a gutter, outlet and downspout are clean, that gutter will move all water away from a building every time it rains.

• Because all gutters get debris in them, they must be cleaned periodically.
• “Periodically” is completely dependent upon the “treed” environment
• No trees at all: Check and clean a minimum of once a year
• Moderate trees: Check and clean minimum 2x per year
• Heavily treed: Check and clean each time gutter is filled with debris. This could be once or twice A WEEK when leaves are falling.

Install a cover product on your gutters:

Although there are many gutter covers available, there are really only 2 types of gutter covers:

1. Flat screen cover that sits flat on top of the gutter, and
2. Helmet or Reverse Curve cover that slides under the bottom roof shingle, is installed (screwed) into the top front of the gutter and essentially extends the roofline to the front edge of the gutter.

Important facts to consider when choosing a cover:

• There are good covers and there are bad covers. No cover keeps everything out.
• Good covers are strong and will not crush in if, for example, a squirrel walks on it or a falling tree branch falls on it. Good covers are installed in a manner that they cannot blow off the gutter in high winds or be easily crushed into the gutter.
• Bad covers are flimsy and installed in a manner that they can actually blow off the gutter or crush into the gutter.

• Good flat covers can work well if they are maintained properly.

• They must be brushed off from time to time or the debris that sits on them will get wet, disintegrate and eventually clog the holes in the flat cover.

• Good helmet or reverse curve gutter covers work very well but are not completely maintenance free. The principal these helmets are based on is water adhesion, also called capillary action. Water flowing onto a this type of cover will adhere to the cover, adhere to the front curved part of the cover and flow into the gutter.

• The demonstration often used is pouring water slowly out of a glass and watching the water “adhere” to the outside of the glass and flow down the outside surface of the glass.

• Good, properly installed helmet type covers do work in most rains. However, as a practical matter, extremely heavy rains especially flowing down a valley in a roof may overflow a helmet type cover. This may be acceptable if heavy rains are infrequent because of the benefits of actually keeping most debris out of gutters.

• Helmet cover maintenance: The cover itself and especially the “nose” (front curved portion) must be clean or covers will lose their “adhesion” capability. In many environments helmet covers may need little maintenance. However, in pineland treed environments, for example, maintenance is needed because the “sap” from pine needles sitting on helmet type covers will decrease the adhesion feature of the cover.

• Also, until the helmet is completely wet, adhesion may not occur. This means in a rain that is initially very heavy, water may overflow the helmet until it is completely wetted.

• The claim of helmet covers, which is essentially true, is that only small debris may get into the gutter and will be washed out with the next rain.

• This claim does beg the following question: Can the outlet (hole in the gutter at the top of the downspout) become clogged from debris getting into covered gutters? If the outlet becomes clogged, it cannot be seen because the helmet “closes” the gutter. This is definitely a problem because water will eventually overflow the gutter and the homeowner will not know of this problem until damage is done, and then it is too late.

For example, bees get in under a helmet covered gutter. The bees build a beehive. The bees leave, the hive stays. This beehive could eventually clog the small standard outlet in this covered gutter. If this occurs a Homeowner will not know they have a water problem until it manifests itself as damage to their home, and then it is too late.
Install an insert product in a gutter:
Another type of “cover” is a foam or wire type insert installed into the gutter. The theory is similar to flat screens (described above) in that the insert will let water through and keep debris out of the gutter.
- The top of these inserts are essentially flat when installed into a gutter.
- They must be brushed off from time to time or the debris that sits on them will disintegrate and eventually clog the foam or wire.

Install a “bulb-shaped” or “wedge-shaped” device into the outlet in the gutter:
If the outlet (hole in gutter at top of downspout) in a gutter is clear, water will always flow out of that gutter even if there is debris in the rest of the gutter. So, although these types of outlet devices seem to be a good idea to keep the outlet clean, they often quickly cause clogging at the outlet.

The reason a homeowner puts a device like this in their outlets is that she/he has noticed that leaves, twigs and all kinds of debris gets into their gutters, flow to and clog their outlets and downspouts. Although these devices may initially work, eventually they actually clog the outlet or the area where they are installed. This clogging occurs because these devices stop the debris at the outlets. The debris they stop then collects and collects and collects at the outlets. The debris gets wet and creates a dam. Debris clogs these devices rendering them useless. Too often they create an overflowing problem at or near the outlet.

How about NO GUTTERS, DOWNSPOUTS OR LEADERS AT ALL!
Although this may be a better solution than gutters that don’t work, it is not a good solution for most houses and buildings. The reason most homes and buildings have rain gutters is that water is the enemy of all buildings. If water is not moved away from a building, over time that water will cause damage to that building.

If you choose to remove all your gutters, then the rain water they would have captured and moved away from your house will adhere to your house (see helmets above for adhesion and capillary action of water). That water will flow down the side of your house, find a hole at a window or door or at the basement and, over time, cause expensive, even dangerous damage to your home and your landscaping.

There are areas in the country where gutters are not used and that’s OK. The soffit overhangs are wide
so water falls away from the side of the house and the house is built on a slab (no basement). The soil is sandy and absorbs the rain water very well. If you live in one of these areas, gutters may not be needed.

**Other devices:**
There are many, many other devices on the market from vacuums, blowers and curved hoses to suck, blow or wash gutters clean. There are slatted type devices to disperse the water flowing off the roof. There are even motorized robots to move through the gutter and clean it.

All of these devices along with all covers and inserts are really a testament to the fact that some homeowners and building owners will try almost anything to get rid of rain gutter problems. The actual solution really is simple: **KEEP GUTTERS, OUTLETS AND DOWNSPOUTS CLEAN.** If you do this, your gutters will always work. But because debris gets into gutters 24/7/365 it’s impossible to keep gutters clean on a daily basis... The good news: It is also unnecessary to keep gutters clean on a daily basis.

**Following are your basic rain gutter “solutions” with their Pros and Cons:**

**Good, professionally installed 5”K seamless aluminum gutters with 2×3 downspouts –**

**Pros:**
- Least expensive initial installation.
- Installed properly, maintained and kept clean these gutters should serve you for at least 20 years.

**Cons:**
- Small outlets that will clog quickly when debris gets into the gutters.
- These outlets must be kept clean or water will not get out of the gutter.
- This “open” gutter will get debris in it, so it must be cleaned from time to time to work properly. Professional cleaning 2 times a year at $100 per cleaning is $200/year.

**The SpoutOff installed on all outlets and downspouts, retrofitted or new gutters –**

**Pros:**
- The SpoutOff (www.thespoutoff.com) SuperSized outlet is so big that virtually any debris that flows to the SpoutOff outlet will be flushed out of that gutter ensuring all outlets do not clog.
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- This means water always flows out of your gutters when it rains, even if there is debris in the rest of the gutter.
- Further, because The SpoutOff is a Removable Downspout, anyone can check their 1, 2 even 3-story outlet in less than 1 minute, standing safely down on the ground.
- No ladder needed, no tools needed.
- So the day before a rain, all outlets can be checked. As long as outlets are clear, tomorrow’s rain will flow away from your house.
- The SpoutOff can be retrofitted to present gutters that are in good condition.
- Inexpensive and effective!

**Cons:**
- Debris will get into the gutters so, although gutters will always work when it rains because of the large SpoutOff outlet, gutters will have to be cleaned periodically.
- The SpoutOff must be installed with 3×4 downspouts so new downspouts may have to be installed.

**Good, Professionally Installed Flat Gutter Covers –**

**Pros:**
- Good flat gutter covers will keep most debris out of your gutters.
- Flat type covers can be retrofitted to present gutters that are in good condition.
- Less expensive than helmet/reverse curve type covers.

**Cons:**
- Flat type covers must be brushed off periodically depending on how heavily treed the environment is.
- If brushing off is not done, debris sitting on the flat cover will eventually clog that cover.
- Cannot see if outlets are clear because the cover “closes” the gutter.

**Good, Professionally Installed Flat Gutter Covers and The SpoutOff –**

**Pros:**
- Good flat gutter covers will keep most debris out of your gutters.
- The SpoutOff SuperSized outlet is so big that virtually any debris that could get into a covered gutter will be flushed out of that gutter with the next rain.
- Further, because The SpoutOff is a Removable Downspout, anyone can check their 1, 2 even 3-story outlet in less than 1 minute, standing safely down on the ground.
- No ladder needed, no tools needed.
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• If the outlets on covered gutters are clear, the covers are working.
• Flat type covers and The SpoutOff can be retrofitted to present gutters that are in good condition.

**Cons:**
• Flat type covers must be brushed off periodically depending on how heavily treed the environment is.
• If brushing off is not done, debris sitting on the flat cover will eventually clog that cover.
• The SpoutOff must be installed with 3×4 downspouts so new downspouts may have to be installed.

**Good, Professionally Installed Helmet-type/Reverse Curve Gutter Covers –**

**Pros:**
• Good helmet-type gutter covers will keep most debris out of your gutters and require little maintenance.
• Helmet type covers can be retrofitted to present gutters that are in good condition.
• No costly professional cleaning of gutters 2, 3 or 4 times a year.

**Cons:**
• Because some debris will get into the gutter, you have no way to easily check the gutter and outlet to ensure the gutter and outlet are not clogged.
• The cost of good helmet type covers is your second most expensive option.

**Good, Professionally Installed Helmet-type Gutter Covers and The SpoutOff –**

**Pros:**
• Good helmet-type gutter covers will keep most debris out of your gutters and require little maintenance.
• The SpoutOff SuperSized outlet is so big that virtually any debris that could get into a covered gutter will be flushed out of that gutter with the next rain. Think bee hive.
• Further, because The SpoutOff is a Removable Downspout, anyone can check their 1, 2 even 3-story outlet in less than 1 minute, standing safely down on the ground.
• No ladder needed, no tools needed.
• No costly professional cleaning of gutters 2, 3 or 4 times a year.
• If the outlets on covered gutters are clear, the covers are working.
• Helmet type covers and The SpoutOff can be retrofitted to present gutters that are in good condition.
good condition.

Cons:

- The SpoutOff must be installed with 3×4 downspouts so new downspouts may have to be installed.
- The cost of good helmet type covers and The SpoutOff is your most expensive initial investment but gives you the best of all worlds:
- Good covers keep most debris out and you can check your outlets in 30 seconds standing safely down on the ground. If the outlets are clear your covers are working.