Your Fall Gutter Checklist

Gutters are your home's foundation protection system. They catch the water coming off your roof and send it away from your house. Five minutes with this list can head off thousands of dollars in damage.

Check from the ground (safe DIY)

- [ ] Leaves, sticks or debris sitting on top of your gutter guards
- [ ] No guards? Leaves or debris poking out of the top of the gutters
- [ ] Water stains or streaks running down the front of the gutters or fascia
- [ ] Gutters sagging, tilting or pulling away from the house
- [ ] Downspouts that drip or overflow instead of draining at the bottom
- [ ] After a big rain, once things dry: a wet spot left on the ground under the gutter line, especially at the corners

Look from the ground or a window. Leave ladder and roof work to a pro.

Clean twice a year: late spring & late fall

Late spring
after seeds, pollen and blossoms drop

Late fall
after the leaves are down

- Twice a year is the minimum. Lots of trees close to the house can mean more often.
- Clear the downspouts as well as the troughs; a clogged downspout backs everything up.
- Water should land away from the house, not pool against the foundation.

Warning signs: call a pro

- Soil washing out or eroding near the foundation
- Soft, stained, peeling or rotting fascia or soffit boards
- Water overshooting the gutters during a rain
- Gutters that stay clogged right after cleaning, or are pulling loose
- Water stains on ceilings or walls near exterior walls

Rot behind gutters is slow and hidden. It often doesn't show until it's already bad.

Gutter guards: what they do and don't do

- **They do** keep most leaves out of the gutter, so maintenance is far less.
- **They don't** make a house maintenance-free. Debris still builds up on top, especially under lots of trees.
- With guards, plan on clearing the tops about twice a year, not two or three times a season.
- Not sure if guards fit your house? Ask during your free inspection.

Why it matters When gutters don't drain, water overshoots and erodes the ground at your foundation, or works its way behind the roof edge into the fascia, soffit and decking.

Safety first: never work on a ladder near power lines, in wet or windy weather, or alone.

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