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Care For Your Gutters

This is the perfect season to keep up with gutter care. Rain can absolutely batter your gutters during the spring, while the fall and winter bring falling leaves, ice and snow into the mix.

Protective homeowners use this season to give their gutters some TLC before and after the elements come into play. Doing so can help identify leaks, cracks or blocked downspouts that can lead to costly repairs once the weather turns.

So between vacations or trips to the beach, be sure to spend a Saturday afternoon checking in on one of the most important structural aspects to your home: The gutter system.

CLEANING SAFETY

A simple cleaning can go a long way to extending the life of your gutters. If you choose to undertake this project yourself, keep in mind some safety tips:

- Make sure you have a sturdy standalone ladder – one that you don't have to lean against the home or gutter system.
- Always take your time heading up and down a ladder, and make sure to let a family member know that you will be doing ladder work.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help in steadying the ladder as you use it.

• Also, remember a durable pair of gloves and protective eyewear. The last thing you want to happen is to poke one of your eyes with a twig or small branch.

CHECK YOUR WORK

Once you clean out all of the leaves, sticks and other obstructions, check for leaks. Rinse the gutter downspout with a garden hose to remove all leftover items and check for smooth water flow. Crank the hose up a bit, allowing you to really test your gutters for leaks or blockages.

Obstructed downspouts can lead to water and, eventually, ice buildup once the weather turns colder. This can contribute to shingle damage and even interior leaks – both potentially costly issues that can be mitigated with some simple gutter care.

