



The Importance of Keeping your Gutters Clean

By the Norfolk Building Department

Let's face it, fall is here in full force, and with the weather we've been having over the past few weeks, the wind and rain has really helped our trees shed. And if you're like most Norfolk residents, you have the pine needles AND leaves covering everything in sight. We know what a chore it is to get out there and do fall clean up, but we want to remind you to remember to clean your gutters as part of your fall (and spring) clean up. Here are a few reasons why it is important to keep your gutters clear of debris like pine needles and leaves, and hopefully save you on needing costly repairs down the line.

Water, Water everywhere...

As we all know, when it rains, it pours, but having clogged gutters can be a big problem for your roof and fascia (the boards behind the gutters). The water must go somewhere, and if it can't flow down, it will easily backup, and soak those seams and boards. Over time, this allows rot to happen, and can create additional problems for the interior of your home. Additionally, if the water overflows out the sides of your gutters, and the water doesn't appropriately run-off from your home, you could start to see water finding its way through your foundation and into your basement.



Pesky Pests

Something many homeowners often overlook is that bugs love gutters. When you let debris sit in your gutters, it becomes an ideal home for pests like mosquitos and carpenter ants. Carpenter ants have a particular taste for fascia boards, so don't give them a place nearby to cozy up. Clear running gutters allow bugs to wash away with the rain and help prevent pest damage to your home.

Ice Dam-age

We all remember the winter of 2016, all the ice dams that occurred, and the damage they left in their wake. Melting snow travels down your roofline, and into your gutters. By keeping your gutters clear, the water has somewhere to flow, and this can help prevent the icy buildup that we call an ice dam. If your gutters are overfull, they can pour over the sides, and in the wintertime, this water can freeze. The freezing water expands and can cause additional damage if it seeps between the fascia and your roofline. These ice dams are preventable if you give your gutters some attention before snowy season. It's also a good idea to have a roof rake on-hand, so that in the winter, when the snow builds up on the gutter, you can clear it away to prevent this type of damage.

Safety First

Remember, keep safety in mind when completing this home maintenance project. If you aren't comfortable working on a ladder, consider local fall clean up companies to do the job for you. Sometimes it can be worth the cost of hiring someone, to save you a hospital visit. If you are a DIY-er, keep ladder safety in mind, and consider having someone with you.

Helpful Options to Consider

You may or may not know that there are items available to prevent leaves and buildup in your gutters. Gutter whiskers and other insert-type products sit in the gutter and prevent leaves from getting trapped. There are also mesh guards, which are a cheaper option, and simply net over the gutter. Additionally, there are snap-in covers that can prevent debris from getting into your gutters.

We wish you the best in completing this chore, and all the others joys that come along with homeownership.