

Get Your Mind in the Gutter

Tips for Safe Fall Outdoor Maintenance

Gutter cleaning can be a mind-numbing and dirty job if your home is not equipped with those covers designed to keep them free from tree debris. And if you don't pay attention or you think you can "just reach" that last bunch of wet leaves, you could make a misstep that lands you or someone else in the hospital.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 164,000 emergency room-treated injuries and 300 deaths in the U.S. are caused by falls from ladders every year. Before undertaking your DIY project, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the proper set up and use of everyday household tools.

The challenge for almost every maintenance

project is access. Does your home's roof have multiple or inset rooflines or dormers? Assess beforehand how easy or difficult it will be for you to safely get to all the areas.

If your home is built on a slope, you may need additional brackets and braces for your ladder, or scaffolding. Wooden ladders and step ladders are often unstable. The use of extension ladders is recommended, if possible.

Protect yourself from exposure to germy bird and animal waste. Wear gloves to protect the hands from scratches, and protective eyewear as a barrier against dirt, debris and droppings.

Before emptying the gutters, carefully

remove any leaves from the roof with a long-handled rake. Clearing any valleys will keep the mess from ending up in your gutters after the next rainfall.

What NOT to Do

Over-reaching from the ladder can put you off-balance and be very dangerous. You won't save time by reaching for those few extra inches. It's better to climb down the ladder and reposition it.

Even if the pitch of your roof is not steep, walking on the roof can be slippery, especially if wet leaves are present.

Using metal tools to clean inside the gutter can introduce the area to rust and shorten the life of your gutters.

Leaning the ladder on the gutter itself will cause dents. It's better to use a ladder stabilizer to set it against the roof, or ladder bumpers to lean against the siding.

When to Go For Hiring A Pro

If you're hesitant on cleaning the gutters yourself, consider hiring a professional gutter cleaner. Get references from friends or neighbors. **GOLDEN RULE: Be sure whomever you hire has the proper insurance.** If someone is injured while working on your property and is not covered, you as the homeowner are liable. Call **The Starr Group** to review the contract before work starts, we'll make sure everyone is covered as necessary. ☑

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414-421-3800

5005 Loomis Road
Greenfield, WI 53220
www.StarrGroup.com

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