

## **How to Select A Rain Gutter**

Good gutters should be an integral part of a home's exterior. Old, damaged or defective rain gutters can cause a lot of damage. When a gutter clog, the water is not diverted properly and overflows into either the house or foundation. This can cause wood rot, foundation problems and landscaping erosion.

In addition to damage to your home, a rain gutter clogged with soggy leaves and debris is the perfect breeding ground for mold and mildew, as well as mosquitoes and other pests. When considering a new gutter system, a home owner must take several things into account: among them, price, aesthetics and how the rain gutter needs to perform depending on the area in which they live.

Does the area have extreme temperatures, heavy snow and rain, or ice storms? Are there a lot of trees in the vicinity? All these questions need to be taken into consideration when deciding on what type of rain gutter system to install, and design.

If the primary purpose of gutters is to collect water from the roof and direct it away from the home where it could cause damage, then the first thing you want to know is whether or not your gutter system is properly designed. Good systems drain in such a way as to keep water out from under your foundation while keeping your fascia, siding and paint dry.

## **Material**

There are several different types of material used to make rain gutters. Vinyl is great for do-it-yourselfers and can be found at home-improvement centers. The gutters can be installed by the homeowner because they are simple to cut and configure. The drawback to a vinyl gutter is that it is susceptible to brittleness with age and extreme cold.

Aluminum, a popular choice, is more prone to denting, but its color weathers well. It is very adaptable and most often used in seamless rain gutter systems. Aluminum is the most common product used today. The gutter holds more water than traditional wood gutters, and this is the product which is generally recommended.

Less frequently used materials include galvanized and stainless steel. Copper is also an attractive choice, but more expensive than the rest. Copper also requires a more expert installer. Wood is another material used for rain guttering, most often in restoration projects.

## **Type**

The two main types of rain gutter systems are sectional and seamless. Sectional systems lend themselves more to do-it-yourself installations due to the high configurability of the parts. They are made up of either vinyl or aluminum sections that are fastened together.

A drawback of sectional rain gutters is that the joints are prone to developing leaks. Gutter additions, such as screens and filters, help these basic rain gutters stay clog free. A gutter topper is a covering which allows water to flow along a contoured “lip” which feeds into your rain gutter. This keeps debris and animals out of your rain gutter. The second type of rain gutter system is the seamless rain gutter. This is a no-clog system which catches and routes water down and out while diverting leaves and debris to the ground. This type of rain gutter is quickly becoming a favorite choice due to its durability, seamless appearance and easy maintenance.

## **Gutter Covers**

Gutter covers are used to help keep gutters clear of debris and they are getting better and better each generation. Initially, manufacturers produced galvanized, vinyl-coated metal or plastic screens. More recently, cover-like gutter guards have been introduced. Some snap into place; others roll out of the factory with gutter and cover molded into one piece.