H&C ACADEMY

Gutter Care & Rainwater Drainage

Six practical guides to help you understand, maintain and troubleshoot your guttering system.



GUIDE 1 Why Are My Gutters Overflowing?

Understanding the problem before deciding what needs fixing.

Gutters are designed to collect rainwater from the roof and channel it towards a downpipe. When water starts overflowing, it it's easy to assume the gutters simply need cleaning. Although blockages are common, they're not the only cause.

Common Signs and What They Mean



Overflowing near the downpipe
Often caused by a restricted outlet or blocked downpipe.



Overflowing halfway along the gutter
May indicate a low point, sagging section or alignment issue.



Overflowing along the entire length
Can indicate widespread debris, insufficient capacity or heavy rainfall.



Water dripping from a joint
Usually caused by a failed seal, displaced fitting or movement between sections.

What to Check

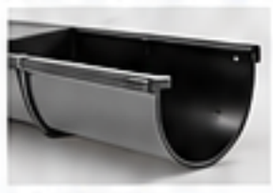
1. Where the water is overflowing.
2. Whether it happens in light or heavy rain.
3. If the downpipe is carrying water away.
4. Whether the gutter is sagging or misaligned.
5. If joints are leaking.
6. Whether the downpipe or drainage system is blocked.

Matt's Professional Tip:
Identify why the water isn't following its intended route. Cleaning a gutter won't repair a failed joint, and replacing a joint won't resolve a blocked underground drain.

GUIDE 2 Understanding Your Guttering System

Profiles, components and how the system works together.

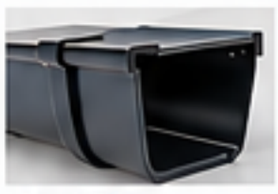
Common Gutter Profiles



Half-Round
Traditional curved profile, widely available in uPVC and other materials.



Square-Line
A modern angular profile, often used on contemporary properties.



Deep-Flow
Designed to accommodate greater water flow for larger roofs or higher rainfall.



Ogee
A decorative profile commonly used where a traditional appearance is desired.

How to Identify Your Gutter Manufacturer and Profile







The manufacturer's name or logo is often moulded into the plastic, normally inside the gutter joint (union fitting) or along the inside of the gutter itself. Identification markings may also appear on outlets or stop ends. Once you've identified the manufacturer, check the profile and size before ordering replacement parts. Similar-looking systems are not always interchangeable.

Main Components



Gutter length
Collects and transports rainfall.



Union bracket
Joins gutter sections with seals.



Fascia bracket
Supports the gutter at regular intervals.



Running outlet
Connects to a downpipe.



Stop end
Closes the end of a gutter run.



Angle
For corners.



Downpipe
Carries water to the drainage system.



Pipe clip
Secures downpipes.

GUIDE 3 Gutter Joints, Brackets and Common Repairs

Understanding which components fail and why.

Leaking Union Joints



Common causes:

- Perished or displaced seals
- Dirt trapped against seals
- Incorrectly positioned sections
- Cracked fittings
- Insufficient allowance for thermal movement

How a professional repairs the joint:

1. Inspect the joint and surrounding sections.
2. Remove and clean the fitting.
3. Replace damaged seals or the complete joint.
4. Reassemble and test for leaks.

Sagging Gutters



Possible causes:

- Broken or missing brackets
- Incorrect bracket spacing
- Loose or deteriorated fixings
- Distorted gutter lengths
- Poor original installation

What to do:

- Inspect the fascia and brackets.
- Check alignment and falls.
- Replace damaged brackets with compatible fittings.

Cracked Guttering



Repair or replace?

- Small cracks may be repairable depending on the material and location.
- Replacement is often more reliable for extensive damage.
- Multiple defects may make full replacement more economical.

Matt's Professional Tip:
Before replacing a leaking joint, check the gutter's alignment and whether the adjoining sections are correctly seated. A new fitting can still leak if the original installation problem remains.

GUIDE 4 How Professional Gutter Clearance Works

What happens during a gutter cleaning appointment?

What Collects in Gutters?



Leaves and organic debris
Common around trees, especially in autumn.



Roof moss
Can become compacted and trap further debris.



Silt and sediment
Fine particles settle, particularly in low points.



Vegetation
Seeds can germinate, sometimes developing roots.

The Professional Clearance Process

1. **Initial assessment**
   The operative assesses the property, access conditions and any visible defects.
2. **Equipment selection**
   Professional gutter vacuum systems use suction and lightweight poles with different nozzles for each gutter profile.
3. **Removing debris**
   The gutter is cleared systematically, including corners, angles, outlets and areas beneath roof valleys.
4. **Checking the outlets**
   Debris is removed from outlet openings and downpipe entrances.
5. **Final inspection**
   Where possible, the operative checks for remaining debris and visible defects. Camera attachments may be used for hard-to-see sections.

What Gutter Clearance Does Not Automatically Include

Gutter clearance
Removes internal debris.

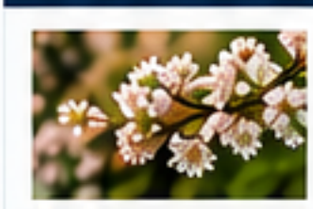
External gutter cleaning
Removes dirt and staining from visible surfaces.

Gutter repairs
Addresses damaged joints, brackets or sections.

Drain clearance
Deals with underground drainage restrictions.

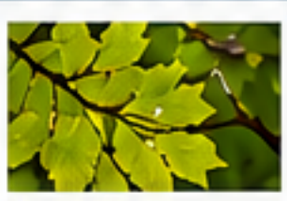
GUIDE 5 Seasonal Gutter Maintenance

How the changing seasons affect your rainwater system.



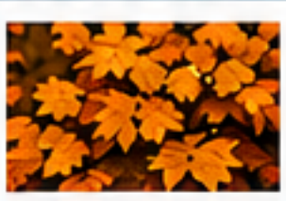
Spring
Checking for winter damage.

- Look for displaced sections, loose brackets, leaking joints and debris.
- A good time to assess any repairs needed.



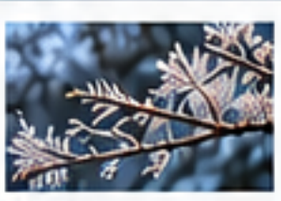
Summer
Inspecting during dry weather.

- Check visible brackets, joints and alignment.
- Dry conditions can conceal drainage problems that only show during rain.



Autumn
Managing falling leaves.

- Leaves, twigs and moss can accumulate rapidly.
- Clearance after the main leaf fall reduces the risk of winter blockages.



Winter
Managing rainfall and freezing conditions.

- Blocked gutters can retain water, which may freeze and increase load on brackets and joints.

How Often Should Gutters Be Maintained?

For many properties, a visual inspection twice yearly is a useful starting point. The right frequency depends on your property, nearby trees and previous maintenance history. Properties surrounded by mature trees may require more frequent clearance.

Matt's Professional Tip:
If your gutters consistently fill within three months, an annual visit is unlikely to be sufficient.

GUIDE 6 When the Problem Isn't Your Gutters

Understanding downpipes, gullies and underground drainage.

The Water's Journey



Matt's Professional Tip:
Start by identifying where the water stops flowing correctly. Working through the system logically can prevent unnecessary repairs.

Common Problems Beyond the Gutter

1. **Blocked Downpipe**
   Debris can accumulate around bends or narrow sections, causing water to back up.
2. **Blocked Gully**
   Gullies can collect leaves and mud. If water cannot escape, it may overflow around the base of the downpipe.
3. **Underground Drainage Restriction**
   Caused by sediment, root intrusion or damaged pipework. Specialist equipment may be required.
4. **Poor Gutter Alignment**
   A clear gutter can still retain water if it is incorrectly aligned.
5. **Inadequate Drainage Capacity**
   Some properties have insufficient capacity for the roof area and rainfall intensity.

How to Narrow Down the Problem

Observation	Possible cause
Overflow near gutter outlet	Outlet or downpipe restriction
Water backing up at gully	Gully or underground drainage issue
Standing water midway along gutter	Alignment or support problem
Overflow only in heavy rain	Capacity issue or partial restriction
Water leaking at a connection	Joint or fitting defect