



# FACTS<sup>TM</sup>NOTES

Spring 2005

## SPRING TIME HOME TIPS FROM UPSTATE HOME INSPECTION

### *Spring is in the Air. And Maybe in Your Gutters too.*

April showers definitely bring May flowers, bringing your home to life after the long winter. However, the increased amounts of rain that we've been experiencing may have played a key role in clogging your gutters. Gutters are essential to your home because they help prevent water from causing serious damage or even ruining a home. But if you don't keep them clean they will not serve their intended purpose and may damage your home, thus depreciating the value of the home, or the potential resale value.

#### **Clogged gutters can lead to potential problems such as:**

- Damage to your roof and walls leading to leaks.
- Damage to your home's foundation, as clogged gutters will often allow large quantities of water to fall right next to your home's foundation, provoking basement dampness and/or mold and mildew
- Dirty or stained siding from overflow.
- Rot at your roof's edge.



### **How to Clean Your Gutters:**

Upstate Home Inspection is happy to provide these tips for cleaning your gutters this spring.

- Once you've got your ladder firmly in place, begin to remove leaves, twigs and debris by hand, (we recommend using gloves), or with a large spoon, garden trowel or a gutter scoop. You can make your own gutter scoop by cutting the bottom of a plastic gallon jug.
- Wet down any hardened or caked on dirt, so as not to damage the gutter itself.
- Put debris in a trash bag, so that you can just drop it when it's full.
- Use a hose to clean gutters once the debris has been removed (this will also allow you to see if there are any leaks in the gutter)

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Cleaning your gutters every spring will help to prevent some of these problems, and Upstate Home Inspection recommends that you clean or have your gutters cleaned each spring, and again in the fall. Taking measures to avoid the problems now will save you a great deal of time and expenses in the future, even if you don't plan on selling your home.

**You'll also want to check to make sure that your downspouts are not clogged. To do this:**

- Use the hose to gently flush the down spouts. Do not use a great deal of water pressure from the hose, as down spouts aren't designed to sustain a lot of pressure.
- If the down spout cannot be unclogged with the hose, we recommend using plumber's snake, or even a wire coat hanger to loosen the clog.

Taking just a few hours to clean your gutters this spring will not only help keep your home looking good, but it will help prevent problems with your home for years to come.

**We hope that you enjoy your spring and summer!**



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## **Safety Tips:**

When you decide to clean your gutters this spring, make sure that you abide by these safety rules to prevent injuries:

- Make sure that the ladder that you are using is sturdy, and well secured.
- Always keep one hand on the ladder, and don't over-reach. Keep most of your body within the rails of the ladder.
- During the rainy season, your roof will likely be very slippery. Avoid sitting on edge of the roof, even if it might seem easier than standing on the ladder.
- Always make sure you have someone with you while you're cleaning your gutters. They can help keep the ladder sturdy, and assist you during the cleaning.
- Do not hold onto the gutter or down spout while cleaning your gutters. They are not meant to support your weight.



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