



A leaf blocking device that sits in your guttering will allow the water to flow while ensuring any debris like leaves can't sit and block the gutter.

PHOTO: FOURSEASONS GUTTER PRO.

Time for gutter talk

DEBB TAPP

Spouting is often considered "out of sight out of mind" - until it overflows.

Even then Roofing Association of New Zealand (RANZ) chief executive Graham Moor says homeowners will still, more often than not, ignore it.

"Spouting is very much one of those things that people don't think about until it rains and it overflows."

"Then when it stops raining the problem goes away and people forget about it - but if they ignore it, the next time it rains they might well be sitting in their lounge with a piece of ceiling on the floor next to them!"

Overflowing spouting is a problem that requires immediate attention, says Graham, otherwise it could cause long-term damage.

"It is very important that spouting is in good working order - if you don't control the water off your house you're not only going to have a mess from it splashing down the sides of the house when it overflows and water running down your neck as you walk under it, but it can do a lot of damage to the house itself."

"It can keep the wall claddings wet, it can undermine the footings, the piles, all sorts of things," says Graham.

In the 30-plus years Graham, a plumber then roofer by trade, has worked in the industry he has seen many water-damaged wall claddings.

"The water damage causes it to rot from being continually wet over time - I have seen gutter systems which have overflowed into soffits and caused flooding into the house."

Homeowners can easily avoid those situations and extra expenses by simply addressing any problems straight away.

"If your spouting is overflowing, more often than not it will be blocked by leaves and debris, it's a common problem due to the lack of attention spouting gets."

There are a number of cleaning devices for spouting on the market, but Graham says the easiest way is

to climb a ladder and clear the blockage.

Abide by the three points of contact rule for ladders - two feet on the ladder, one hand on the spouting (or ladder) and one clearing out the gutter.

"Be careful even putting a ladder against the gutter, because you could actually smash it if you're not careful," says Graham.

Only do this if you are confident and safe working at heights.

"Unfortunately DIYers hit the ground way more often than tradespeople, about 70 percent of falls at height in fact are at home injuries according to Worksafe."

"If you have trouble working at heights, or are even a little hesitant, it's best to call in the professionals, not just for spouting installs but for any maintenance."

Always wear gloves in order to avoid cuts from roofing iron.

Then, when clearing any blockages, don't push it into the downpipe or use a hose to squirt it out.

Instead, scoop out the larger elements and put them in a bucket to dispose of later.

"Don't think you can wash it all down the downpipe, all you're going to do is move the blockage from the spouting to your stormwater system and then you've got an even bigger problem."

If the spouting continues to overflow, check that the stormwater system isn't blocked.

"If it's a metal gutter and there are red spots on the underside of it all signs point to corrosion, and if it's cracked or it's PVC guttering that has splits in it, it needs attention."

"Some splits are quite obvious but some of the earlier PVC gutters can become brittle over time due to exposure from the elements."

Either way, if water is discharging where it shouldn't be, then it's time to call in an expert, and a competent roofing contractor who is a member of RANZ at that.

Often the problem can be fixed, but usually if a patch of spouting needs replacing the rest of it won't be far away either, says Graham.

"If you're going to replace four or five metres, you might want to

think about doing the whole house."

There are decisions to be made around spouting - steel like COLORSTEEL® or Colorcote®, aluminium, copper or PVC for starters.

Unlike the days of old, PVC is available in a range of colours, not just white, which means it can be matched to some roof colours and it is a resilient material.

Steel and aluminium offer longevity too, a range of colours to suit and many companies can make spouting to length on-site.

Copper is ageless, long-lasting and often looks best as a classic profile on the likes of pioneer-type cottages.

There are certain requirements to adhere to depending on where the home is.

For example, if it is seafront, different grades of coatings must be used for those environments.

Once material and colour is chosen, it's a matter of deciding on spouting style and the use of internal or external brackets.

"It really comes down to thinking about what will suit the era and look of your home," says Graham.

Whatever the spouting option, it is important to maintain it - and that goes for older spouting too.

"You can easily get 20 to 30 years out of spouting no trouble at all, but if you are not particularly good with maintenance, you might reduce that to five to 10 years, or even less."

Maintenance means simply cleaning out guttering a few times of year, not just when it starts to overflow.

Gutter protection systems are a good idea as they prevent larger debris, but spouting still needs to be cleared of the small particles that fall through.

One often overlooked area that needs regular maintenance is the underside of the spouting.

"It's classed as an unwashed area, which means certain salts and the like can build up on the underside because it's not washed by natural rain washing."

"If you don't clean it, you can start to see it manifest itself into what is called white rust, so

spouting can rust from the underside through."

To avoid rust, unwashed areas need to be hosed down regularly, preferably with a good nylon brush and some detergent.

"Spouting isn't just spouting, but we do think about it like that, we don't realise how important it is."

"Spouting and guttering are an important part of a home's system, so it is vital they are maintained and kept clear of debris to do their job properly."



These before and after photos show the benefits of using a leaf screen over your guttering.



PHOTO: LEAFSCREEN

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Palmerston North

Suburb	2 bdrm	3 bdrm	4 bdrm	5 bdrm
Linton	-	\$382,000	\$488,000	-
Longburn	-	\$347,000	-	-
Milson	\$336,500	\$415,000	\$551,000	\$605,000
Palmerston North	\$326,000	\$458,000	\$562,000	\$639,000
Roslyn	\$302,000	\$354,000	\$466,000	\$600,000
Takaro	\$310,000	\$387,000	\$436,000	\$484,000
Terrace End	\$333,500	\$435,000	\$517,000	\$583,000
West End	\$326,000	\$424,000	\$509,000	\$646,000
Westbrook	\$260,000	\$336,000	\$391,000	-

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Legal advice a key part of home buying



Having a registered valuer assess the proper market value of the property may provide other useful information for borrowing needs as well.

A building consultant's report and/or an engineer's report may also be appropriate.

If there are any doubts as to the condition of the property, structural building issues or concerns about the land generally, talk to a property lawyer about arranging for a qualified builder or engineer to inspect the property and report fully on its condition.

The lawyer will ensure that a condition is inserted into the contract making the purchase subject to the purchaser being satisfied with the results of that report.

If the report identifies problems, a lawyer can recommend options and negotiate to have the problems fixed at the vendor's cost before settlement or seek a reduction in the purchase price.

Without a condition in the contract, or with a badly worded one, the buyer might have to complete the purchase and take on any problems.

Property lawyers also check property titles. These documents record who owns the property and any mortgages or other restrictions that apply to the property, which might prevent enjoying the use of the land, such as covenants or easements.

builder's report or Land Information Memorandum (LIM) and the unconditional sale of the buyer's property.

Property lawyers can help with the wording of these conditions so they meet the client's needs.

They can also advise in other areas of the law that may need to be dealt with as part of the overall transaction, such as making a will, setting up a trust and

taxation implications.

High on any home buyer's due diligence should be obtaining a LIM report on the property for sale.

This is provided by the local authority and will identify the zoning of the property and whether the proper building consents have been obtained for any additions and alterations.

Buyers also should seek a valuation report before committing to a sale.