



HOME IMPROVEMENT > EXTERIOR REMODEL > ROOF

# 10 Types of Rain Gutters and How to Choose One

Learn which type of rain gutter system works best for your home.

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and meltwater from the roof of the home and any overhanging objects like [trees](#), then redirect the flow through a series of interconnected channels leading down and away from the home. This process isn't just intended to prevent rain from pouring over the edges of the home. [Rain gutters](#), when attached to matching downspouts, allow the water to drain in a safe location where it is less likely to run back towards the foundation.

Rain [gutters](#) are available in a number of common styles and shapes, plus various materials, including aluminum, vinyl, galvanized steel, copper, and zinc. These products also come in a range of color options, so you can find a gutter system that matches or accentuates the [outdoor](#) aesthetic of your home. Learn more about these types of rain gutters and get some helpful tips for deciding on the right type of rain gutter for your [home](#).

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## 01 | Seamed Gutters

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Alex-White / Getty Images

- **Best For:** DIY installation, repair, and maintenance; includes vinyl, aluminum, galvanized steel systems

Seamed or sectional gutters come in 10-foot lengths that are made to attach directly to the home's [fascia board](#) using hangers. This style of gutter can come in vinyl, aluminum, galvanized steel, copper, or zinc, though galvanized steel, copper, and zinc gutters need to be installed by professionals.

Seamed gutters are also available in half-round, K-style, box-style, and custom fascia shapes, depending on your preference. Seamed gutters are a good choice for DIY installation and are typically more affordable than seamless gutters, though the type of material can increase or decrease the overall cost.

Another beneficial factor of choosing seamed gutters is that if one section gets damaged in a storm or otherwise fails, you only need to replace the damaged 10-foot section instead of trying to repair or replace an entire seamless gutter system.

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Yesim Sahin / Getty Images

- **Best For:** Professional installation; wider variety of color options; minimum leakage; and a smooth, uniform appearance

As the name suggests, seamless gutters are made to be all one piece, instead of having separate sections that need to be joined together during installation. Seamed gutters come in distinct 10-foot lengths, but seamless gutters have almost no length limit.

Professional gutter installers are able to create seamless gutters of nearly any length because they use a mobile shop to create custom gutter roll-outs specifically measured and manufactured for your home. The gutter starts out as a large roll of aluminum. The roll runs through the machine and is extruded at the other end in the shape of a gutter.

This service comes at an increased cost, but the gutter system is superior to a seamed gutter system. Seamless gutters are more

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A major drawback to seamless gutter systems is that they are typically only available in rolled aluminum, while seamed gutters can be made out of vinyl, aluminum, galvanized steel, copper, or zinc.

## 03 | Half-Round Gutters

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Vaivirga / Getty Images

- **Best For:** DIY installation; traditional appearance for home with a classic look; or for copper and zinc gutter systems

Traditional gutter systems will typically have a half-round appearance with a U-shaped profile. These gutters are not as tall as K-style gutters, though they are wider, often protruding from the fascia by about five to six inches.

If you are interested in installing gutters on a historic home, make

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local ordinances before proceeding because you may be



Additionally, copper and zinc gutter products are often made with a half-round gutter shape. So if these premium materials are an attractive alternative, you might want to consider purchasing half-round gutters for the house.

## 04 | K-Style Gutters

of 10



Brett Taylor / Getty Images

- **Best For:** DIY installation; modern appearance; high water volume capacity; and enhanced structural strength

The most common gutter shape is the K-style gutter which has largely replaced half-round gutter systems since this gutter is deeper and has greater structural integrity. This allows the gutter system to carry more water in the deep troughs with a reduced chance for the water to spill over the side or cause the gutter to collapse.

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If you opt for installing K-style gutters, it's recommended to invest in a gutter guard and regularly clean the gutters to avoid the formation of clogs and blockages.

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## 05 | Custom Fascia Gutters

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Lex20 / Getty Images

- **Best For:** Professional installation; seamless appearance; contemporary aesthetics; and custom-built gutter system

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One of the main benefits of custom fascia gutter systems is to give the home a seamless appearance that cannot be replicated with half-round,



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professionals. The installers will work with you to create a custom-built gutter system made from a single piece of aluminum.

Typically, fascia-style gutters have the same height as K-style gutters, but they are narrower, which can make them more difficult to clean. Custom seamless fascia gutter systems will usually cost more than seamed half-round or K-style gutters.

## 06 | Box-Style Gutters

of 10



beekeepx / Getty Images

- **Best For:** Professional installation; high water volume capacity; heavy-duty construction; and enhanced durability

Large, heavy-duty box-style gutters are made for commercial, industrial, and multi-unit residential properties, but you can have a gutter installation company install them on a single

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Box-style gutters need to be installed under the roof's shingles, so it's recommended to have box gutters installed when the home is built or when the roof is under repair. These bulky products can be as large as 10 inches wide and 10 inches deep, allowing them to handle heavy rainfall or meltwater after a snowstorm.

## 07 | Vinyl Gutters

of 10



Ratchat / Getty Images

- **Best For:** Seamed DIY installation; 20-year lifespan; affordable price; and a variety of available colors

Vinyl is one of the most common materials used to make gutters because it's inexpensive, easy for DIYers to install, and water-resistant. White is the most common color for vinyl gutters, but a number of darker colors like forest green and brown are available, too.

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rain gutters, though the price increases to about \$5 per foot if the gutters are professionally installed.

Vinyl gutters are highly durable. Unlike aluminum or steel gutters, when vinyl gutters are dented, the dent usually pops back on its own.

Vinyl gutters are heavier than aluminum gutters, so they can strain the fascia, especially when the gutters are full of water. Dark-colored vinyl gutters aren't as colorfast as painted aluminum gutters.

## 08 | Aluminum Gutters

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 Dzejni / Getty Images

**Best For:** Seamed DIY installation; 30-year lifespan; seamless

**SKIP TO CONTENT** Professional installation; inexpensive; rust resistant




colors to match the aesthetic of the home.

Aluminum gutters last about 20 to 30 years and cost about \$2 to \$3 per linear foot for a DIY installation. You can expect to pay about \$5 to \$6 per linear foot for a professional seamed installation, while the cost for seamless aluminum gutters is closer to \$10 to \$12 per linear foot.

Dents don't fare well with aluminum gutters. Dents can be popped back by hand, but the gutter never quite looks like the original. Aluminum gutters caved by falling tree branches need to be replaced.

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## 09 | Galvanized Steel Gutters

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 Angkana Kittayachaweng / Getty Images

- **Best For:** Seamed professional installation; 30-year lifespan; moderate durability; and high rainfall capacity volumes

Galvanized steel gutters tend to last about 20 to 30 years, depending on user maintenance. This is about the same amount of time as aluminum gutters, though galvanized steel is resistant to rust, heavy rainfall, and wet weather.

Due to the need for soldering during installation, galvanized steel gutters are typically installed by a professional and cost about \$8 to \$10 per linear foot. You can also invest in stainless steel gutters, though the price increases to about \$16 to \$20 per linear foot.

Steel gutters hold up against dents better than aluminum gutters, but still not as good as vinyl gutters.

## 10 | Zinc or Copper Gutters

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 Ratchat / Getty Images

- **Best For:** Seamed professional installation and repair; 100-year lifespan for copper gutters, 80 years for zinc gutters; high weather resistance; high- and low-temperature resistance; and rust-resistance

What could be a better material than metal for gutters? When the metal is steel or aluminum, the metal needs to be powder-coated for appearance as much as for durability. But when the metal can stand on its own, look great, and has natural properties that resist the elements, that metal is either zinc or copper.

Zinc is a premium gutter material that costs about \$10 to \$22 per linear foot for a professional gutter company to install a zinc gutter system on your home. Once installed, pre-weathered zinc gutters are incredibly low-maintenance with a high level of rust resistance and a self-sealing patina that helps to prevent scratches or cracks. Expect professionally installed zinc gutters to last up to 80 years, but keep in mind that zinc isn't the best choice for locations with salty air or

d roofs.

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water, cold, and heat. This type of gutter system doesn't warp, bend, or rust in extreme weather conditions, and can last for up to 100 years if it is properly installed and maintained. The drawback is that copper gutters need to be professionally installed and this installation can cost as much as \$15 to \$25 per linear foot.

## Choosing Rain Gutters

When you are looking for a new rain gutter system for the home, it's important to learn more about the various styles, shapes, and materials before coming to a final decision. Seamed gutters are a great option if you want to take on the installation yourself because they are more DIY-friendly than seamless gutters. While deciding between seamed or seamless, keep in mind that some gutter products are designed for professional installation only, including copper gutters and zinc gutters.

Similarly, if you choose to have box-style gutters installed at your house, you will need to hire a professional that can retrofit these gutters to a residential home. For quick, easy DIY installation, it's recommended to install aluminum or vinyl half-round or K-style gutters. This will also help to keep the price of installation down, but it's important to note that aluminum, vinyl, and galvanized steel gutters wear out much faster than copper or zinc.

Ultimately, you will need to select a style between seamed or seamless. Choose a shape from half-round, K-style, custom fascia, and box-style. Then finally decide on a material, including vinyl, aluminum, galvanized steel, zinc, and copper. Factor in the cost, ease of installation, and average lifespan of each product before making a decision.

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