

Gutter Buying Guide:

16 Questions to ask before you decide

This helpful report was put together by Audubon Gutters; The Gulf South's largest most experienced gutter installation company. We believe that an informed customer can make the best decision concerning gutters for their home or business. There is much more to gutters than you can see standing on the ground, there are many styles, processes and options available. Although price is an important factor; whether the gutters do the job channeling water from your home, how long they will last and how they enhance your homes appearance are other points that should be strongly considered. Thank you for your interest in this report and our company.

Drew Dodd
President
Audubon Gutters

1. Are your gutters “seamless”?

Gutters are considered “seamless” when they are installed in a continuous manner from corner to corner. Seams should only occur at the corners.

2. What type of seams does your company use on corners?

There are three types of corner seams commonly used. The corner with the least amount of seams has the least chance of a leak developing. Different corner styles have more seams than others.

Box Miter: A preformed corner that actually has 3-seams per corner. Mainly used because they are inexpensive and don't require skilled labor to install.

Strip Miter: A seam formed in the corner and held together by a separate thinner strip of aluminum material. Also less expensive to produce, it actually creates 2-seams per corner with the “strip” requiring paint due to discoloration over time.

Custom Hand Mitered: Crafted by a skilled gutter installer, this seam has only one seam per corner. It fits tighter, stronger and longer. Audubon uses only custom hand mitered corners when installing gutters.

3. How do you fasten the gutters to the home? Nails or screws?

Nails (or spikes): Generally an older style method, the nail goes through the outside of the gutter, and passes through the inside and attaches (hopefully) into the fascia board and rafter. Nails tend to pull out over time due to weight of water in the gutter causing sagging and detachment from the home.

Screws: A more reliable method because screws don't pull out over time and don't corrode. Installers use 2 ¾” screws to attach the gutter to the home through the fascia board and into the rafter. Be sure the screws are “long-form” screws, over 2 ½”, some companies will use a shorter screw (¾” or 1”) which saves time on labor and cordless

drill batteries, but doesn't hold to anything other than the fascia, which wasn't meant to fully support a gutter. Audubon only uses long-form screws during installation.

4. Should I choose aluminum over galvanized gutters?

Galvanized: The standard until the 1980s, malleable and easy for a sheet metal worker to install, but prone to corrosion and decay.

Aluminum: The present industry standard. Strong, durable, doesn't corrode and is easily formed (rolled) by a gutter machine on the job site.

5. What types of styles are available?

There are a wide variety of styles and colors available. The more committed the company to the gutter business, the more options a company will have.

Style types:

Seamless Aluminum Leafguard Gutter System: One-Piece

Seamless Half-Round 6" Aluminum or Copper Gutters

Seamless New Orleans Traditional Box Gutter Aluminum or Copper

Seamless 5" & 6" Standard Aluminum and Copper Gutters

There are other types of "leaf-free" products on the market, which are considered "add-ons": screens, helmets and flashing style attachments make up "add-on" choices. "Add-ons", while inexpensive, are considered a short-term solution, because they must be installed as new onto the existing gutter framework. "Add-ons" are typically installed or attached to the homes roofing shingles or decking, which voids the existing roof warranty.

6. Are your installer's Subs? Or Fulltime employees of your company?

Subs: 9 out of 10 gutter installation companies use subcontractors, which basically means they hire someone else to do the job they sold you. Using subcontractors on a job can cause problems for the homeowner because the homeowner is put in between the relationship of the gutter company and their Sub. If there is a problem or complication the homeowner has to work with two companies to hopefully have the job completed and to their satisfaction.

Fulltime Employees: It is best to have your job done by a company who uses their own fulltime employees, that way there is no confusion or complication as to who is ultimately responsible for your job. Fulltime gutter installers are committed to one line of work and considered more to be craftsmen than laborers. Audubon only uses their own fulltime employees on the jobs.

7. Are the installers Drug-Tested?

The jobsite is your property, your home. Always deal with the highest quality installers you can find. Drug testing helps eliminate undesirable workers from being near your property or family. Drug testing also increases safety on the job site by decreasing injuries. Audubon has a random drug testing policy.

8. Are all workers on the job insured?

Being assured that you are working with a company that has liability insurance and workmen's compensation binders which covers your home AND their employees (or Subs, if they use them). The company should be able to provide you with specific documentation to show they bear responsibility. Audubon Gutters provides the highest level of insurance available in the industry.

9. Will I be able to identify all your workers?

Again, The jobsite is your property, your home. Make sure that you will always be able to identify the company's workers by sight (so you don't have to ask them who they are and should they be here). The various types of "Audubon Gutters" apparel can easily identify all Audubon employees.

10. Does your company have a job expeditor?

An Expeditor works for the installation company. The Expeditor's job is to evaluate the job before work begins. The Expeditor rechecks the Sales Estimators calculations and makes sure there were no unforeseen complications that could occur after the job begins. Having an Expeditor eliminates many problems that can crop up during installation. Audubon has an Expeditor that checks every Leafguard job before it starts.

11. How many days will the job take?

Barring weather or unforeseen complications, all jobs should take only two days.

The first day: removal of the existing gutter (including haul away) and preparation for the new.

The second day: the entire installation should be completed. Audubon's goal is to always have the job complete as soon as possible, so you the homeowner, can have your household back to normal.

12. What about clean-up of the job site?

After the work is complete, except for the appearance of the new gutters, the worksite should look the same as it did before the work began. Audubon is passionate about clean-up, you will notice that they keep their truck extremely clean, which is how your job site will look afterwards.

13. Does your company have any complaints registered with the BBB?

Checking for complaint with the Better Business Bureau is your job. It's easy, just call 504-581-6222. All you will have to do is input the companies phone number that you are investigating. You will find that Audubon Gutters has NO complaints on file...they never have.

14. If I buy the Leafguard product, will I ever have to clean out my gutters again?

NO!

Even if for some bizarre reason the gutters are clogged, Audubon will come out and clean them at no-charge to you.

15. Can you repair prior damage to the home?

Sometimes after removal of existing gutters wood damage is found in areas that couldn't be seen before. A reputable gutter company will have a carpenter on staff to repair the area. Fees for repairs are typically charged by the foot.

16. What type of Satisfaction Guarantee does your company have?

A satisfaction guarantee means exactly that; the job is not complete until the homeowner is satisfied with the work performed. Audubon Gutters does not expect full payment of a job until the customer is satisfied.

Thank you for reading this valuable information. We hope it helps you make a confident informed decision.

For our future customers with leaf and clogging problems, we have a thorough 12-minute DVD, which explains the benefits of the Audubon Leafguard One-Piece debris shedding gutter.....GUARANTEED! Ask for the video, we'll get it to you as soon as possible.

Again thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

**Drew Dodd
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