

# Risky Business

The movie starring Tom Cruise and Rebecca DeMornay, is not the kind of risky business that I am referring to. I am referring to the "risks" of home ownership.



Gutter cleaning and gutter maintenance are an important part of home ownership. Unfortunately, your gutters also collect debris like leaves, twigs, and dirt. If too much of that debris collects in your gutters, there is nowhere for the water to go and gutter cleaning becomes necessary. Gutter cleaning is not a pleasant chore, but it is something that every homeowner has to do for many reasons.

Although gutter cleaning is a chore, if you do not complete it you could end up with far worse problems. Gutters are the first line of defense against erosion of soil around your home's foundation. A gutter system is supposed to carry water running off your roof to down spouts so it does not saturate the soil next to your house. If this soil is saturated, then you run the risk of getting the foundation wet. If the soil underneath your foundation becomes too saturated then it could give way causing a cave in of your home's foundation. In other words, your house would collapse into a giant sinkhole and could be uninhabitable. A foundation exposed to water can lead to a multitude of problems.

Cleaning your home gutters can be a dangerous job. There are a few safety considerations that every home owner must think about. Perhaps the most obvious, is ladder safety. The biggest problem you will face in cleaning the gutters is climbing the ladder that carries an inherent risk of falling which can result in severe injury and even death. With more than 2.1 million people seeking emergency treatment in the United States for ladder-related injuries, almost 10 percent result in hospitalization. The most frequently reported injuries were fractures and 97 percent happened at home, according to the American Journal of Preventive Medicine study.

Once you can reach your gutters for cleaning, you will need some kind of gutter cleaning tools to clean out the debris. The cheapest way to clean your gutters is with a pair of work gloves. What? You cannot use gloves to clean gutters. Well, I should say that you need to put your hands in the gloves. That's right, your hands are an effective gutter scoop. You definitely need a pair of gloves, though. You do not want to be touching the moldy leaves and possible bacteria that have contaminated your gutters.

Mold can develop in standing water in your clogged gutters. Mold often flourishes in areas where it cannot be seen which is why so many people suffer from mold exposure symptoms even when there are no visible signs of mold or musty odors. Just because you can't see it or smell it does not mean it isn't there. The greater your exposure, the greater your risk of developing adverse health effects such as depression, irritability, coughing, wheezing, runny eyes and nose, muscular aches, chills, fever, headaches, tiredness, fatigue, sleep disorders, hay fever allergy type symptoms and possibly a permanent sensitivity (allergy) to mold. It is estimated that approximately 30 percent of us are allergic to mold and suffer adverse health effects because of it. Mold can also cause building materials to decay or rot which leads to a variety of maintenance and structural problems.

If you want to avoid all the risks related to gutter maintenance, then you may want to make the investment into a maintenance free gutter system. These gutter systems vary in method, price, and effectiveness. Finding the right gutter system for your home depends on your local weather, foliage, and the pitch of your roof. Essentially, a gutter protection system using water adhesion principles that allows the water to flow into the gutters, but not the debris that typically clogs them. The most effective gutter system is manufactured right here in Erie, Pennsylvania called; Leaf Hoodie™. It differs from all other closed hooded systems in that it is customized to fit various sizes of gutters, roof styles and pitch. It is not a one size fits all application like all the others in the market. Additionally, heat can be added to Leaf Hoodie™, Gutter Helmet, and Leaf Guard. This product is called Heater Hoodie™.

Areas that receive heavy snowfall are at a higher risk of slip and fall accidents. This can happen right outside your front door caused by the fluctuating temperatures that form ice dams and icicles on your gutters. While many people think of the "slip and fall" as the source of countless frivolous lawsuits, this could not be further from the truth.

These accidents are some of the most common in the United States, with some 1 million people suffering injuries as the result of falls every year due to dangerously heavy icicles that fall from your gutters. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 20,000 people die annually after slip and falls. To prevent these types of winter tragedies

I recommend the Heater Hoodie™.

The Heater Hoodie™ eliminates icicles and ice dams from forming on the gutters and it was specifically designed for climates with heavy snowfall and major ice buildup that we experience here in the Northeast. It is uniquely different from just a heating wire on the roof; the thermostatically controlled heating elements are positioned within the aluminum hood, into the gutter and down the downspouts to continuously melt the snow and ice to move the water away from the foundation of your home.

With numbers like these, it's hard to ignore the danger that falls present with gutter maintenance. So, Show your gutters who's boss with Leaf & Heater Hoodie™ by eliminating all the risks involved in gutter maintenance. There should be no reason why someone should be injured for something that can be done to prevent it. The only thing better than maintenance free is the confidence in knowing that there's a lifetime guarantee on these locally made products!

## Fix Problem Gutters Now!

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