Article published on May 21st 2012 | Home Improvement

Gutters â€“ those long canals dangling on the edge of your roof tasked with guiding rainwater out of the roof and down the pipe. Theyâ€™re also home to dried leaves and other debris that can accumulate notably during the fall season. Of course, where there is dried foliage, there is also the chance of a nasty fire.

Fire hazard experts from the University of California Berkeley say debris in the gutter poses one of the greatest fire threats for a home. The slightest contact with embers or extreme heat will set the debris on fire, causing severe damage to the structure. In February 2012, firefighters in New London, Connecticut responded to a fire in a residential area coming from the gutters. The tenants didnâ€™t realize that their house had caught fire until one of their neighbors alerted them.

Gutter fires can put your home in jeopardy due to its proximity to several core parts of the roof. For example, the truss, normally made out of wood, can catch fire and spread throughout the roof, inflicting serious damage. It is for this reason that gutters should always be kept wide open.

In a field test, researchers from the said university found out that the roof was susceptible to fire without proper flashing. Metal flashing near the gutter shielded the roof from fire and averted it from penetrating any deeper. However, there are more ways to protect the gutter from a fire.

General cleaning of the gutter should be a habit for homeowners to get rid of the debris that can fuel a fire. If the drain is clogged with debris, call a contractor specializing in gutter repair Bethesda MD has to offer. The important thing is that the gutter should allow water to flow smoothly from the roof to the ground. If left unattended, the gutter can be a recipe for a disaster waiting for the proper catalyst.

Another good measure is to protect the gutter in wire mesh, as suggested by the researchers at Berkeley. Fine wire mesh on top of the gutter can fend off foliage and other debris from littering the gutter while still allowing water to pour into the gutter. Tests show the simple wire mesh gives outstanding protection, cutting costs on gutter repair Maryland has to offer.

You can read more on the Berkeley report on fire in gutters and other related materials at the universityâ€™s Center for Fire Research and Outreach at firecenter.berkeley.edu. Otherwise, call a service provider for any gutter repair Bethesda MD homes request that you may need.

Article Source:
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Article Keywords:
gutter repair bethesda md, gutter repair maryland

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