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Construction Minute–“Slope or Nope”

How to Spot Bad Gutter Work Before It Becomes a Big Problem

By AssociationHelpNow®

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Installing a five-foot section of gutter may seem like a no-brainer. Just slope it slightly and let gravity do the rest, right? But extend that to a hundred feet and suddenly, the game changes—especially when you factor in water load, debris accumulation, and structural pressure. That’s where many contractors slip up, and where boards and managers need to be vigilant.

So how can you tell if the contractor got the slope right?

It’s easier than you think. All you need is a hose and a few minutes of patience. This simple “water test” can quickly reveal whether the gutter system will drain properly or become a pond for standing water.

Here’s how:

1. **Do the Test While the Contractor Is Still on Site** – With the ladders still up and the contractor within earshot, take a hose and feed water into the highest point of the newly installed gutter.
2. **Let It Run for a Few Minutes** – You want enough water to simulate a moderate rainfall.
3. **Observe the Flow** – Check that the water is exiting cleanly from the downspout. If it’s trickling slowly or not at all, you may have a slope issue.

- 4. Remove the Hose and Watch Again** – After the flow stops, wait a few minutes. If there's leftover water puddling in the gutter, that's a red flag. Gutters should not hold water; they should shed it.

Proper slope ensures that gutters don't become mini retention basins, which can lead to rust, rot, sagging, insect issues, and ultimately, costly repairs.

So next time a contractor finishes a long gutter install, take a minute to slope-check. It might just save your community from a bigger headache down the line. In construction, water should *flow*, not *pool*—so it's either **slope or nope**.

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