

Drains and Guttering - Oh the Glamour!

Drains may not excite you in the same way as wooden flooring or voile curtains, but it's vital to keep them in good order. Otherwise the glamorous home you've created could end up ankle deep in sewage. Gross! So who is responsible for drains? Normally, if you buy a property you buy the drains with them and become responsible for their maintenance and repair. Some homes share a private sewer with neighbouring properties, which drains into the public sewer. The private sewer is the joint responsibility of the property owners. This may not be the most pleasant thing to have in common with your neighbours, but you might as well agree to have it all serviced say once every five years to avoid a disaster. If nothing else it's a good ice-breaker when you pop round to introduce yourself to the guys next door. Other properties drain straight into a public sewer, which is the responsibility of the local council or water authority. Get in touch with them if you have any questions or concerns. A blocked drain can quickly become a health hazard and if it's not dealt with then whoever is responsible can be prosecuted, or the local council can recover the cost of repair from those responsible. So another reason to maintain drains properly and avoid unwelcome stress. You can minimise the risk of blocked drains by not flushing rags, disposable nappies, sanitary towels, condoms and plastics down the toilet. Instead you should bag and bin them, just like in a public toilet. Also don't pour grease, fats or oils down plugholes or directly into the drains as they are likely to solidify. Dispose of them in a container in the dustbin. And what about guttering? Is it really worth investing money in something so mundane? Well maintained guttering is essential to protect your home from various damp problems. Guttering takes rainwater away from the structure of your property and down into the drains. It needs to be kept in good repair to work effectively. If it's neglected you could end up with damp problems that will abruptly put an end to any luxurious interior you've created. Guttering is usually either metal or plastic. Metal guttering can be replaced with metal (this may be obligatory in conservation areas so check with your local planning office) or plastic. The bolts joining up metal guttering are often rusted solid so will need an angle grinder to be cut. Replacement metal guttering should have a rust resistant primer applied inside and out. Bear in mind that replacing one piece of old guttering may put stress on other joints along the run, causing leaks, so ask the builder to make sure he tests this and leaves everything in a solid watertight state. Metal guttering should be painted for protection with normal outdoor gloss paint. Plastic guttering is more straightforward to deal with. The part to be replaced normally just unclips and the new section clips in. Plastic guttering should not be painted, as the paint will not hold and will end up peeling and looking shabby. While you're having guttering dealt with make sure that any climbing plants are disentangled from it, to reduce the risk of cracks and leakage. Also, make a habit of having leaves and rubbish cleared from drains, guttering and downpipes, particularly at the end of the autumn. This will avoid overflow and damage to the building. Drains and guttering are dull "behind the scenes" elements of a home. Nobody admires them or appreciates the money you spend on them. But if they are neglected they will have their revenge and leave you in despair.

About the Author

Expert tradesperson India Cooper states good drainage is vital to good home maintenance. To find out more please visit <http://www.ratedpeople.com/find/drainage>

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