

WINDOW FALLS AND CHILD SAFETY

Every year, roughly 2.5 million children are treated in the United States for fall-related injuries. Of these, falls from windows tend to be the most serious and fatal, especially among male toddlers. Older children are more likely to be seriously injured by window falls as summer approaches and they spend more time around the home. This problem is heightened by the fact that windows are left open for ventilation more often during the summer months than the rest of the year.

These are some window safety tips:

- ❑ When ventilation is not needed, windows should be closed and locked.
- ❑ Windows can be equipped with window guards to prevent children from falling out. These devices are constructed of horizontal bars spaced close enough together so that a 5-inch ball cannot pass through. Proper window guard placement can be determined by the local building code official or the local fire department. Window guards should include a quick-release mechanism to allow for a rapid exit in the case of an emergency.
- ❑ Furniture that children can climb, such as dressers, beds and toy chests, should be kept away from windows.
- ❑ Window screens are designed to keep insects outside of a house and should not be relied upon to keep children from falling out of windows.



- ❑ Shrubs, wood chips, grass or other soft surfaces may be strategically placed beneath windows in order to lessen the degree of injury sustained from falls.
- ❑ Children's play areas should be kept away from open windows.
- ❑ If possible, ventilation should come from the upper sash of a double-hung window rather than the lower sash, which may be more accessible to a child.
- ❑ Windows that are low to the floor may be particularly easy for young children to operate. The windows in the photo are low enough to be easily accessed by a small child.

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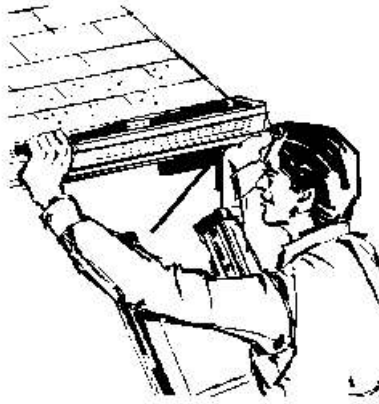
ALUMINUM GUTTER REPAIRS

If you have ever encountered aluminum gutters fastened with long aluminum spikes, you know that the elements, especially heavy rains, can sometimes work the spikes loose and cause the gutters to sag and leak.

Pounding the spikes back in can remedy the problem, but other times the gutters only work themselves loose again.

There is a solution: replace the loose spikes with special oversized screws. These screws, which are eight inches long instead of the usual seven inches and which are also thicker, will more tightly grip the spike holes, which become enlarged when spikes work loose and are repeatedly pounded back in.

The oversized screws have deep threads and are driven in with a screwdriver instead of a hammer. Another simple approach is to remove the loose spike with pliers, pack the hole with wood putty, and drive it back in after the putty has dried.



ASK THE INSPECTOR

Is the dishwasher in the home we just purchased broken, since there is a puddle of water inside the machine even after the dishes are washed?

Erick's Response:

Dishwashers in proper working order do not drain themselves completely. Instead, some water is left in the unit at the end of each cycle. This keeps the element type heater, which is used for the drying cycle, from burning up. If a substantial amount of water stays in the sump, there could be a drain clog. A clogged air gap, which is that small chrome dome on the kitchen counter, can cause the same effect. Also check the hoses on the dishwasher regularly to assure that they are supple and flexible. Replace any hose that shows indication of dry rot or cracking.

Upgrading Electrical = Increased Value

By today's standards, a typical residential electrical system could be 100, 125, 150 or 200 amps. Federal guidelines and national codes require a minimum upgrade of 100 amps for a single-family residence. If a home does not meet this minimum, one should consider to upgrade.



A licensed electrician should evaluate and analyze the system to determine the current and future power needs of the household. An upgrade isn't cheap (the national average for upgrading to 200 amps is over \$2,000), but it should be considered an investment. It can increase the value of the

home and make it easier to sell. The homeowner should get bids from licensed electricians before commissioning the job. If the circuits are mapped out before the electrician arrives, it could cut costs of the job.



Have a Safe and
Happy July 4th
Erick, Jim, Pete & Laurie