

GUTTER AND DOWNPIPE REPAIR

Depending on location and maintenance, most galvanised iron guttering and downpipe will rust in time. Painting and regular maintenance, including keeping the line of the gutter level, is important. Leaves and debris must be removed regularly.

As soon as debris accumulates in a sagging section of guttering it will cause local dampness and the rotting of the debris will release substances that hasten corrosion. It will not be long before rust penetrates the metal.

Downpipes often rust at the level of the sealed drain inlet when, in periods of sustained heavy rain, the drains do not empty fast enough and water banks back into the pipe. Before making the repair, examine the junction of downpipe with terra-cotta or PVC drain to see whether water is draining away freely. If it is not, seek a plumber's advice before making a permanent repair.

Repairs to metal downpipes and guttering can be made successfully without solder, but a pop-rivetting tool is a help. A suitable Silicone Sealer may be used with rivets. If the corroded section is extensive, it must be removed, if necessary by hacksawing out at top and bottom. A good, clean-cutting pair of metal snips will also be needed, as will a file, emery paper, and putty knife or other mixing tool; electric drill or hand drill.

Proceed this way:

1. Obtain a matching section of downpipe or gutter about 200 mm over the length of the removed section.
2. With downpipes, slit the corners, or sides, of the upper end of the new piece for about 100 mm so that it can be expanded and slipped up over the existing pipe. Slit the bottom end of new section so that it can be compressed to enter the existing piece.
3. Work the new piece of downpipe into position to ensure a smooth fit top and bottom, leave in position and drill suitable holes for pop rivets through both thicknesses, at either end. Remove the new piece, clean all round each end with emery cloth, also inside the cuts of the existing pipe. File off rough edges.
4. Apply Silicone Sealer as directed and coat one outside and one inside surface-for more convenient handling than if both ends of the new piece are coated.
5. Insert the new section, place pop rivets and smooth off sealer.

With guttering, make the joint with the fall, i.e. place the new piece under the old where the fall is towards the repair, reverse the procedure where the fall is away from it.

Fix any sag in the gutter by placing new supporting brackets if necessary.