



## **SHOW YOUR METAL - THE GROWING POPULARITY OF METAL GUTTERS**

If you are looking for a rainwater system that really performs and stands the tests of time metal systems should be the first choice. Although metal systems will often cost more initially, they will outlast and outperform a uPVC product.

All metal rainwater drainage systems offer excellent 'life time' value. With home owners and specifiers increasingly looking at the whole life cost of their projects, especially those with self-build schemes where clients are also looking for individuality and low maintenance solutions, metal systems provide exceptional value for money and design solutions that cannot be matched by other materials.



*Aluminium rainwater system installed at St Catherine's Dementia Care Home, Winchester  
Courtesy of Alutec*

Metal rainwater systems also offer an unrivalled ability to cope with extraordinary weather – materials are strong, gutters can be deep with larger holding capacity and improved flow rates, metals expand and contract much less than uPVC systems which have to include joints to allow for thermal movement. All these features mean a greater ability to cope with and endure our increasingly volatile weather conditions.

Importantly today, the metals also represent the most sustainable, environmentally friendly building materials due to their longevity - avoiding the use of more resources, and their recyclability - saving further landfill space.

The metal rainwater industry has a long history in the UK market dating back over a century when lead and cast iron were the materials of choice. Today the industry uses the latest in manufacturing technology to produce a wide variety of high quality solutions in cast aluminium and iron, fabricated steel and aluminium.

Chairman of the Metal Gutter Manufacturers Association (MGMA), Geraint Jones explains “The choice of material and designs available in metal rainwater products has exploded in recent years with the availability of pre-painted metal systems giving clients and architects confidence in the quality of finish and providing the installer with pre-finished systems that are easy to install.” “Awareness of metal rainwater systems is increasing amongst home owners; the internet has certainly helped with manufacturers and distributors developing market leading web sites providing valuable information on material choice, installation and price.”

## **Steel**

Steel is the most cost effective of the metal rainwater ranges and is smart, stylish and contemporary. Its modern look and flexibility of colour finish means it can add style to a contemporary building and looks equally effective on traditional properties or for commercial applications.

Steel is light weight and easy to manage but stronger and more durable than uPVC. Installed it offers a robust rainwater disposal solution with manufacturer's guarantee of up to 15 years, although with sensible maintenance, life expectancy should be more like 25 years.

Finished in either plain galvanised, powder coating or pre-painted, steel can come in a variety of colours giving flexibility and choice.



*Steel guttering installed at Northern Glass Express, Fleetwood.  
Courtesy of A Steadman & Son*

### **Extruded and pressed aluminium systems**

Modern manufacturing processes produce extruded and pressed aluminium systems that are long lasting, highly efficient and a cost effective, quality option. Aluminium does not rust and so requires minimal maintenance which is another great benefit in our wet climate. Pressed and extruded aluminium systems are more economical than traditional, thicker cast aluminium and should still last in excess of 25 years.

These systems are available in a wide range of profile and coatings to suit all types of building. From half round, vintage moulded ogee, Victorian to contemporary joggle box profiles all available in a factory applied powder coated system to any RAL colour.

Gutters are generally available in large profiles so this material works well on light commercial and industrial buildings as well as residential projects.

### **Cast aluminium**

Traditional cast aluminium is authentic, extremely robust and long lasting. It is lighter in weight and so easier to install than cast iron, but heavier than modern fabricated aluminium.

Cast aluminium is made using traditional die casting methods; it is for these reasons that it is towards the top end of the price range - more expensive than fabricated aluminium and steel but lower in cost than pre painted cast iron, offering an ideal option for a quality project or the perfect alternative for a traditional property where cast iron is not a requirement.

Cast aluminium now comes in a wide variety of profiles which look great on a range of projects, traditional and modern. Available powder coated to any RAL colour, it offers great choice, comes ready for immediate installation and requires minimal maintenance.

### **Cast iron**

Cast iron offers an unrivalled life span compared to all the other materials. It is immensely strong, will look superb on traditional style properties and is a must for listed properties and historical renovation projects. Although the most lavish material for guttering it should last at least 50 years with the correct maintenance, with many systems lasting 100 years plus!

Cast iron guttering now comes in half round, Victorian ogee or moulded ogee profiles with round and square downpipe profiles to match. It is available in a primer coat for painting on site or a pre-painted finish for direct installation. Cast iron is the heaviest of the materials and although installation is easier than ever before, a cast iron rainwater system needs to be professionally installed.

Where a unique style of gutter, downpipe or hopper head is required, bespoke designs are available from specialist foundries to create the products necessary to match a historic or tailored system.

For further information about metal rainwater systems visit the web site at [www.mgma.co.uk](http://www.mgma.co.uk)



*Cast iron downpipe. Centre for Islamic Studies, University of Oxford  
Courtesy of Hargreaves Drainage*

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