

So ya wanna be a PART TIME CHEMIST?

"HELL NO! I want to hang gutter and spend my winters in Florida, possibly perfecting the chemistry of a piña colada!"

Well, sorry Joe, but the real world keeps getting more complicated, partly because of chemistry. We are now selling four different kinds of gutter sealants so I thought I should try and explain the differences:



This is a "Solvent-based Butyl Rubber" (S.B.R.) and its cheap but good. This means that it works reasonably well in most applications. The solvents used are mineral spirits and hexane. It cures through evaporation, which is rather slow with these solvents.

Features:

1. Surfaces should be clean and dry for good adhesion.
2. It does not tool very well, use mineral oil as a tooling lube.
3. Don't paint over it because it takes days to cure.
4. It should work for 3 - 5 years before the solvents evaporate and it loses elasticity.
5. Do not use it below 40°F. Clean up with paint thinner.



Parbond is a solvent-based acrylic latex with special advantages for gutter guys. Toluene is the solvent used in this sealant; it evaporates fast and tends to cut through light surface oil.

Features:

1. Surfaces should be clean and dry, but it is not as critical as with OSI-SBR.
2. This stuff skins up very quickly so you can paint over it in half an hour.
3. It flows well into small gaps and is "self leveling," which is another way of saying that it's runny and puddles.
4. Don't try to tool Parbond, you have to flow it on.
5. Parbond should be good for 5 - 10 years.
6. This is one of the best cold weather sealants; if you can work outside, it will too. Clean-up with mineral spirits.



Geocel is a tripolymer using xylene as a solvent. It is a little more expensive but it works great. Its chemistry makes it much more aggressive at grabbing a surface; it has very good adhesion, even on wet or oily metal. If you get caught hanging gutter in the rain, or get called back to take care of a leak, this is the tube to take.

Features:

1. Clean and dry is preferable - but this will stick to almost anything.
2. Geocel tools well; the manufacturer recommends soapy water or Xylol as a tooling tube but I found that spit worked just fine. Because Geocel doesn't puddle and you can push it into a joint, you don't have to use as much.
3. Don't paint over it; it takes a full day for the xylene to evaporate.
4. Excellent service life, very UV stable, should stay elastic for 25 - 50 years.
5. Geocel will work below freezing, but you may want to warm up the tube in your armpit first. Clean-up with Xylol.



Silicone is not widely used as a gutter sealant, it is more of a window/siding product, but it is the right stuff in some situations. It will fill bigger gaps or holes than the other sealants, it can also serve as an adhesive. It is stable over a very wide temperature range -50° to + 300°F.

Features:

1. Surfaces **must** be clean and dry; this is critical with silicone.
2. It tools well with soapy water (or spit).
3. Don't paint over it. Atmospheric moisture is important in the curing process; it may not set up well in the desert. And yes, it smells like vinegar because acetic acid is one of the solvents.
4. 25 - 50 year service life.
5. Silicone will work in any temperature that you can. Clean-up with paint thinner.

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Tool.com](http://www.PetitTool.com)

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