

Rainwater Tanks

Rainwater tanks are a great way to help to conserve the Gold Coast's drinking water supply and can provide a valuable source of water for your home.

Rainwater tanks are an important part of the *Gold Coast Waterfuture Strategy* that provides a blueprint for managing the Gold Coast's water supply over the next 50 years. Our target is that rainwater tanks will provide 20 million litres of water per day to our city by 2056.

Uses of water from rainwater tanks

Homes that have access to the town (reticulated) water supply can use rainwater for:

- watering the garden
- washing the car
- other outdoor uses
- cold water tap of the washing machine in the laundry
- flushing the toilet (except in the Pimpama Coomera dual reticulated area where recycled water will be available)
- topping up the swimming pool

Please note: If you connect your tank to internal plumbing fixtures then you will require plumbing approval and connection to the reticulated town water supply in order to provide a continuous water supply for back-up purposes. For more information please contact Plumbing & Drainage Services on (07) 5582 8393.

Queensland Health does not recommend the use of water from rainwater tanks for drinking or food preparation if a town (reticulated potable) water supply is available.

In areas where the rainwater tank is the sole supply of water, Queensland Health recommends that all users of the water follow the advice provided on their website to optimise the quality of the water supplied from these tanks and to manage risks to human health. A copy of QDC MP 4.2 and MP 4.3, associated guidelines and HB 230 are available on the Department of Infrastructure and Planning website at www.dip.qld.gov.au.

Homeowners and contractors should make themselves aware of Council's Land Development Guidelines Planning Scheme Policy 11 and Queensland Development Code MP4.1, MP4.2, MP4.3 before starting the installation. Copies of these codes can be found online at www.dip.qld.gov.au/building/queensland-development-code.html. Alternatively, you can contact our Plumbing and Drainage Section on (07) 5582 8393 for further information.

We are mindful of the importance of community health and recommend that:

- a minimum of 100m² roof area be connected to tank
- leaf and debris screens, in addition to the mandatory mosquito screens, be installed on the tank inlet and outlet
- first flush device/s be installed
- acoustic pump covers be installed to reduce the noise of pumps

Note: 100m² minimum roof area is required only if the tank services internal fixtures.



Mandatory rainwater tanks (eg new home builders)

If you are required to install a tank and connect to plumbing fixtures as a condition of building approval, the minimum tank size is detailed below.

Traditional areas (town water only)

- Detached/freestanding home 5,000 litres
- Attached (duplex, townhouse or Unit) 3,000 litres per attached dwelling

Dual reticulated areas (town water and recycled water)

- Detached/freestanding home 5,000 litres
- Attached (duplex, townhouse or Unit) 3,000 litres per attached dwelling

Queensland Government introduced these new mandatory water saving targets for applications lodged for construction of new houses in south east Queensland from 1 January 2007. For more information on these targets please refer to the Department of Infrastructure and Planning website at www.dip.qld.gov.au.

Note: rainwater tanks installed in areas supplied by town water must be fitted with continuous back-up supply if connected to plumbing fixtures. This is to ensure that during dry periods there is water available to service the plumbing fixtures connected to the system. These can be automatic switching devices, or 'top up' or 'filler' valves (which fill only a small portion of the tank to maintain supply until the tank is filled by rain). Make sure your tank retailer is aware of this to ensure that a suitable tank is supplied. The installation also requires backflow prevention and/or a new water meter to protect drinking water and Council's water mains.

Voluntarily installed tanks

There are no minimum size requirements for voluntarily installed rainwater tanks.

It is the tank owner's responsibility to ensure that the rainwater tank is installed according to State and local government requirements and to obtain any necessary approvals. For further information please contact Plumbing & Drainage Services on (07) 5582 8393.

First flush devices



It's vital that first flush devices are maintained regularly to ensure they remove potential contaminants from your roofwater prior to them entering your rainwater tank. Unlike leaf deflectors, a first flush device cannot function if even partially blocked.

Note: If you value your water quality, a properly maintained first flush device is recommended!

Rainwater tank checklist for owners

3 months

- Clean gutters and remove leaves and debris
- Clean first flush device/s
- Clean leaf guards on rainheads
- Check screen on tank overflow outlet
- Check screen on tank overflow outlet

6 months

- Check roof and flashings for defects and remove overhanging branches
- Check tank for defects, screens and lids are in place and functional
- Check for signs of mosquitoes and larvae
- Check water quality – must be clear, no taste or smell
- Check rainwater taps still have correct signage
- Check pump for noise, for appropriate pressures, for leaks and check acoustic enclosure (if applicable)

12 months

- Check tank support – if on stand or concrete slab check structural integrity

24 months

- Check sediment level in tank

Save water and money

You can reduce water usage and save money by installing a rainwater tank. A rainwater tank that is, correctly installed with leaf, debris and mandatory mosquito screens on the tank inlet and outlet, and that is properly maintained will meet the needs of you and your family for years to come, and you will be helping to reduce the demand on our precious drinking water supply. This, together with other water saving initiatives, promotes more sustainable development in our city.

For further information please contact:

Plumbing & Drainage Section

Implementation & Assessment Branch

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