

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Should my rainwater catchment system be labeled?

A: Yes. Rainwater catchment systems should be marked, in lettering in accordance with the plumbing code, with the words: "CAUTION: NON-POTABLE RAINWATER WATER, DO NOT DRINK."

Q: Can my system be hooked up to the potable water supply of my house?

A: No. Any rainwater catchment system may not have a direct connection to any potable water supply.

Q: Can I use any old container I find as a storage tank?

- A:** No.
- Tanks must be constructed of solid, durable materials not subject to excessive corrosion or decay and be watertight.
 - Permitted to be installed above or below grade.
 - Above ground tanks must be an opaque material, approved for above-ground use in direct sunlight or shall be shielded from direct sunlight. Must be placed in an accessible location for inspection and cleaning. The tank must be installed on a foundation or platform that is constructed to accommodate all loads in accordance with the building code.
 - Below grade tanks must be structurally designed to withstand all anticipated earth or other loads and must include manholes.
 - Tanks must be provided with a means of draining and cleaning.

BENEFITS OF A RAINWATER CATCHMENT SYSTEM

Collecting rainwater is an ancient tradition. There are historical records that show rainwater was collected in simple clay pots over 2,000 years ago in what is now Thailand. Why use a rain barrel today?

- For many households in Southern California, outdoor water use makes up 40% to 60% of the total domestic water demand.
- Harvesting rainwater to use on your plants, especially in the drier months, can save you money.
- Rainwater harvesting can reduce demand on the City water supply. Wise water use is always important, especially during lower than average rainfall seasons.
- Capturing the water rather than letting it flow into the stormdrain system can reduce both water pollution and soil erosion.
- Although the water from the rain barrel is for non-potable use, in an emergency or natural disaster, the water could be boiled and purified for drinking.

Ventura averages plenty of annual rainfall to justify having a rainwater catchment system. For just a one inch rainfall event, a 1,000 square foot roof can capture 600 gallons of water. With an average of 14 inches per year here in Ventura, that's over 8,500 gallons a year that could be harvested to water our landscapes.

REMEMBER

Regular maintenance is a critical element of any plumbing system!

As we look at ways to conserve water, recycling rainwater with catchment systems reduces demand on the city's potable water supply, lowers your water costs and helps protect the environment.



The City of Ventura Neighborhood Preservation Section is available to assist you in understanding the various codes and obtaining compliance. Contact us at 805/658.4711.

There are many ways to get involved to enhance the quality of life in our community. Participate in your Community Council – attend public meetings to connect with neighbors, volunteer, raise issues, and make a difference in your neighborhood!

Find Your Neighborhood Community Council
www.cityofventura.net/involved/communitycouncils

Volunteer Ventura!
www.cityofventura.net/volunteer



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INFORMATION & GUIDELINES

RAINWATER CATCHMENT

IN THE CITY OF VENTURA

- Current Rainwater Catchment Code
- Non-Permitted Systems
- Permitted Systems



RAINWATER CATCHMENT

Rainwater harvesting is the collection of precipitation from rooftops and other above-ground impervious surfaces which is stored in catchment tanks for later use.

Systems can range from a simple barrel at the bottom of a downspout to multiple cisterns with pumps and filtration. Stored water can be used for non-potable purposes such as irrigating gardens or even flushing toilets. Unlike tapwater, rainwater is low in sodium and chloramine and fluoride free. As such, rainwater requires specific measures for its safe reuse in the garden.

RAINWATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS

Based upon the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) Green Plumbing & Mechanical Code:



SYSTEMS EXEMPT FROM PERMITS 360 GALLONS OR LESS

- Maximum storage capacity of 360 gallons (1,363 L).
- Exterior system used for outdoor drip and subsurface irrigation.
- Plumbing permit is not required of systems for single-family dwellings where all outlets, piping and system components are located on the exterior of the building. Permits may still be required for electrical connections, tank supports, or enclosures.



SYSTEMS REQUIRING PERMITS 360 GALLONS OR GREATER

- Storage capacity in excess of 360 gallons (1,363 L).
- A person registered or licensed to perform plumbing design work is required to design the system.
- Permits are required for electrical connections, tank supports, or enclosures.
- No permit will be issued until complete plumbing plans, with appropriate data satisfactory to the Building Official, have been submitted and approved. Submissions shall be submitted to City Hall, room 117.
- System cannot have a direct connection to any potable water supply.
- A cross-connection test must be made in the presence of a building inspector prior to the system activation and permit approval.
- All sizing of system components must be in accordance with the plumbing code.

MAINTENANCE & INSPECTION



Your system must be maintained and inspected on a regular basis according to Table 1110.5 of Chapter 12.120 – Plumbing Standards of the City's Municipal Code.

The property owner must maintain a maintenance log book and keep it available for inspection.

An operation and maintenance manual for rainwater systems required to have a permit must be supplied to the building owner by the system designer. See Chapter 12.120 Section 1110.6 – Plumbing Standards of the City's Municipal Code for required contents of the manual.

WATER QUALITY & TREATMENT



Water treatment is NOT required for systems used for above ground, subsurface or drip irrigation with a maximum storage capacity of 360 gallons.

COLLECTION SURFACES

Rainwater shall be collected and stored from roof surfaces only.

Overflows and bleed-off pipes from roof-mounted equipment and appliances, such as air conditioners and solar hot water systems, must not discharge onto roof surfaces that are intended to collect rainwater.

DID YOU KNOW?

Flooding can be reduced by rainwater harvesting systems as the rain is saved for recycling rather than being flushed straight into storm drains. Every square mile of developed land causes 16 million gallons of rainwater to directly enter the rivers or ocean on a rainy day!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **2010 California Plumbing Code:** www.iapmo.org/Pages/2010CaliforniaPlumbingCode.aspx
- **City of Ventura Municipal Code:** www.cityofventura.net/cm/municipal-code
- **City of Ventura Building and Safety:** Ventura City Hall, 501 Poli St., Room 117 www.cityofventura.net/cd/buildsafe (805) 654-7869
- **American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association (ARCSA):** www.arcsa.org
- **Ventura Water – Water Efficiency:** www.cityofventura.net/water/conservation
- **City of Ventura Rain Barrel Discount Program:** www.cityofventura.net/pw/es/resrecycling

