



Coorong District Council Information Guide 15

Planning & Development

Rainwater Tanks

Introduction

Installing a rainwater tank is a simple and effective way of reducing your impact on our water supply and environment. By capturing your own rain water you are reducing pressure on the River Murray and the amount of storm water that is discharged to the street. They are becoming more and more popular and are ideally suited for collection of water for household usage and garden maintenance.

However if you are considering purchasing a rainwater tank there are a few things to keep in mind.

Do I need Council Approval for a Rainwater Tank?

Approvals may be required for the installation of rainwater tanks. Before a tank is purchased or installed it is important to check with Council's Development and Environmental Services Team to determine whether you require development approval.

A Water Tank (above ground) and any supporting structure does not require approval if it meets the following criteria in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Development Regulations 2008:

- Is part of a roof-drainage system, and
- Has a total floor area not exceeding 10m², and
- Is located wholly above the ground
- Has no part higher than 4 metres above the natural surface of the ground, and
- no part of the tank will be in front of any part of the building line of the building to which it is ancillary that faces the primary street; and
- in the case of a tank made of metal—the tank is pre-colour treated or painted in a non-reflective colour.

If your tank meets the above requirements you do not need to apply for development approval and is not considered development. However if you are unsure about any one of the above stipulations, Council's Planning Officer is available to discuss this.

An item to consider is courtesy to your neighbour. Ensuring that the placement and installation of your water tanks on your property will not affect the amenity of your neighbours is an important thing to respect.

What about Underground Water Tanks?

The construction of a Underground Water tank is also a popular alternative and does require development approval. Consideration should be given to ensuring the foundations of buildings and

structures (including adjoining owner's buildings) are not compromised by the excavation.

The construction or alteration of, or addition to, a water tank (and any associated pump) does not require Development Plan Consent if—

- the tank is ancillary to a dwelling erected on the site; and
- the tank (and any associated pump) is located wholly below the level of the ground

Irrespective of whether a tank requires Development Approval or not, the overflow from rainwater tanks should always be directed to the street and away from all buildings onsite and adjoining properties. If the tank is to be supported by a stand, care should be taken to ensure that there is adequate support for the stand as a 1000 litre tank will weigh over 1 tonne when full. It is recommended that a licensed builder be consulted to provide advice on adequate support for the stand.

Additional Information

The amount of rainwater a household can capture, sort and use annually is dependant on:

- Annual rainfall
- Roof area connected to the tank
- Amount of and frequency of rainwater use and
- Capacity of the tank you choose

Changed building rules requiring new dwellings (and some extensions or alterations) in South Australia to have an additional water supply to supplement the mains water came into effect on 1 July 2006.

These provisions were intended to reduce the demand on the State's mains water supply. Installing specially plumbed, minimum-sized rainwater tanks is the most common way of meeting the additional water supply requirement. Other means of providing the required additional water supply could include developments using a dual reticulated (fixed pipe) water supply system – or approved bore water.

Under the changes, the additional water supply has to be plumbed to either a toilet, a water heater or to all cold water outlets in the laundry of a new home. The same rules apply to new extensions or alterations where the area of the extension or alteration is greater than 50m² and includes a toilet, water heater or laundry cold water outlet.



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Plumbed rainwater tanks

If rainwater tanks are to be used to provide the additional water supply, new homes will need to be designed to ensure that rainwater from not less than 50m² of the roof is:

- Collected by gutters and downpipes
- Stored in a rainwater tank; and
- Plumbed to a toilet or a water heater or all laundry cold water outlets.

If the roof catchment area of the building is less than 50m² all the water run-off from the roof must be collected, stored and plumbed.

What size rainwater tank should be installed?

The rainwater tank must have a storage capacity not less than 1000 litres. The requirement for a minimum of 1000 litre plumbed rainwater tank is additional to any other water storage tank requirements that might be required (e.g. other tanks are required in some areas for bushfire fighting purposes and on-site detention).

Where a number of dwellings contribute to a communal rainwater storage tank, each dwelling must contribute rainwater from 50m² of its roof catchment area to the rainwater tank and water from the tank must be plumbed back to each individual dwelling. In these situations, the minimum rainwater tank size required is determined by multiplying the number of dwellings that contribute to the rainwater tank by 1000 litre for each dwelling.

Are there any other requirements for the rainwater tank?

- An overflow device must be fitted; and
- A mosquito proof, non-degradable screen must be attached to protect the water quality.

When must the rainwater tank be installed?

Regulation 83A of the Development Regulations 2008 states that all new Class 1a buildings (i.e. dwellings and dwelling additions) are required to have all connections made for the supply of water from all sources prior to the occupation of the dwelling. That is, all sources of water identified in the development approval (mains, rainwater tank, third pipe scheme) must be connected before the dwelling is occupied.

Please note that Council has adopted a recommendation from the Carbon Neutral Strategy to waive the fees on development applications for Rainwater Tanks that require Development Consent. The waiving of fees has been adopted to promote efficiencies in energy use within the Council area in line with the Strategy. However if the Rainwater Tanks are included in the same development application as other proposed development (e.g. in conjunction with a shed, house etc.) then the fee waiver does not apply.

For further information in relation to Rainwater tanks usage please refer to the following links.

SA Water
www.sawater.com.au

Department of Health
"Rainwater tanks, maintenance and water care "
<http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/enviro-health-index.htm>

Development Information Guides are intended to help applicants to submit applications which are complete, well prepared, and can be processed efficiently. The information provided is intended as a general guide only and applicants are encouraged to refer to Coorong District Council's Development Plan and to seek advice from our staff if necessary.