

Rainwater Storage Tanks

Frequently Asked Questions: *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* requirements

1. Is a plumbing approval required before I install a rainwater tank?

A plumbing approval is required if it is proposed or required to connect the water tank to plumbing fixtures (*Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003, Part 5 Division 4 section 45 water storage tanks*).

2. If I install a rainwater tank and don't connect this to any plumbing fixtures, do I have to get a plumbing approval?

No plumbing approval is required.

3. What other plumbing fixtures may I connect to the rainwater tank?

There are no restrictions under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002*. However the Plumbing and Drainage Australian Standards recommends the use of non-drinking water to toilet cisterns and cold water taps for washing machine use.

The Queensland State Government Health Department and Council do not recommend the use of rainwater for human consumption, bathing, food preparation and utensil washing water where a reticulated system is available.

4. Can I connect the Unitywater Reticulated water supply to my water tank?

Where the rainwater tank is connected to plumbing fixtures the tank must have the ability to be continuously topped up from the reticulated Unitywater water supply and or being capable of being switched back to the reticulated supply via an approved switching device.

This is a requirement under the Queensland Development Code Part 25. Plumbing approval is required, as backflow prevention devices must be installed to reduce the risk of contamination of the Unitywater reticulated water supply.

5. What documentation do I need to apply for a plumbing approval?

- a. Complete an Application for Compliance Assessment - FORM 1
- b. Provide a site plan, identifying tank/s, backflow prevention device requirements; and
- c. Application fees.

6. How close to the street property boundary can I install a rainwater tank?

- Residential allotments over 450 square metres or at 450 square metres, the minimum front road boundary setback is 6 metres (refer QDC Part 12).
- Residential allotments under 450 square metres, refer to QDC Part 11.
- Access Streets, three metres (Access Street means a street providing local residential access with shared traffic, pedestrian and recreation use).
- Access Place, three metres (Access Place means a minor cul-de-sac street providing local residential access, with shared traffic, pedestrian and recreation use).
- Collector Streets, four metres (Collector Street means a street providing for local residential access and local traffic movement within performance limits defined in Queensland Streets).
- Rural precincts, allotments greater than two hectares, the front road boundary setback is:
 - (i) 10 metres.
 - (ii) 10 metres, exception 20 metres from boundary that adjoins open spaces conservation areas.

- Rural precincts on a lot of up to 2 hectares in area the front road boundary is six metres.

The Queensland Development Code part 11 and part 12 covers provisions for water tanks, alternative provisions are contained within Council's Planning Scheme.

7. What are the side boundary setbacks?

The Queensland Development Code allows a rainwater tank to be built up to a side or rear boundary, provided that the tank height, including any stand, does not exceed 2.4 metres. Otherwise a building application is required.

Requirements for fire separation shall comply with all water tank installations built from combustible materials, tanks built from combustible materials must comply with:

- (i) 450mm clear of the boundary.

This is a requirement under the Building Code Australia (refer clause 3.7.1.7 of Volume 2 of the BCA).

8. Boundary setbacks from easements or Council infrastructure?

The rainwater tank must be clear of any easements or infrastructure, such as sewer mains, water mains, stormwater pipes, recycled and reclaimed mains. And not within any zone of influence to infrastructure, maintaining a minimum distance of 1.5 metres, whichever is the greater.

9. Do I have to get a development approval for building work to install a rainwater tank?

If your rainwater tank installation complies with the following, you will not require a development approval:

- (i) The plan area of the tank is no more than 10 square metres.
- (ii) The height of the tank (including stand) of no more than 2.4 metres, Refer Clause 21 of the *Building Act*.
- (iii) Any side of the tank is no longer than five metres.