

Rainwater Tanks

Rainwater tanks are an excellent way to supplement your mains water supply by capturing rainfall from your home and other large buildings. Rainwater tanks also allow you to contribute to the effective management of our existing water supplies.

Why install a rainwater tank?

A rainwater tank allows you to contribute to the more effective use of our precious water supplies.

1. Avoid wasting the water we have.

At present the rain that falls on your home probably disappears into the storm water system, which means it runs out into the ocean. A rainwater tank allows you to capture this rain rather than letting it run to waste.

2. Protect your investment in your home and garden.

Rainwater tanks are particularly popular for supplementing garden watering. Your garden can be a substantial investment in terms of plants and maintenance. With your own rainwater tank, rain you collect* will not be affected by water restrictions. So with the prospect of dry summers over coming years, a rainwater tank may be a lifesaver for your garden and your investment.

* This only applies to rainfall captured. If in place, restrictions would still apply on mains water used to top up your water tank.

3. Avoid using drinking water for non-drinking purposes.

The average Melbourne household uses around 270,000 litres of water a year, and about half of this is used to flush toilets and on the garden. By using rain water from your tank to water your garden or to flush toilets inside your home you can help us as a community make more effective use of our valuable drinking water supplies.

Will a rainwater tank save me money?

Possibly, but only over a long period of time. It is unlikely that your tank will fill frequently enough to allow you to rely on it. It is most likely your rainwater tank will supplement your water needs rather than replace them. So it will be several years before you will recoup your outlay. The real benefit of installing a rainwater tank is in your contribution to the more effective use of our finite water supplies.

Can I use my tank water inside the home?

Yes. You can use your rainwater for inside the home for tasks such as flushing toilets, provided adequate backflow prevention is installed. If you would like further information on using tank water inside the home contact South East Water Priority Plumbing on 132 812.

What is backflow?

Backflow occurs when a sudden change in water pressure causes water to flow backwards. If your water tank shares pipes or connections with your mains water supply, contaminants could accidentally flow from your tank into the mains system.

How can I prevent backflow?

There are two options. You can install a backflow prevention device or you can ensure that your tank does not share any common pipes or connections with the mains supply. Appropriate backflow prevention is a standard feature of all tanks supplied, installed and fitted for water use inside the home by South East Water.

Can I drink water from my tank?

There is no guarantee that the water in your tank is free from contamination. Even if the water tastes, smells or looks fine it may be contaminated and this risk is often greatest in urban and industrial areas because of atmospheric pollution. Other potential contaminants include detergents and other chemicals from roofs painted with acrylic paints or made from fibrous cement that can dissolve in the run off.

Contaminated water may also contain harmful micro-organisms, such as bacteria, viruses and gastro-intestinal parasites. These micro-organisms (known as pathogens) are not visible and may even be present in clear water.

In contrast, your mains water supply is tested and monitored throughout its progress from the catchment to your tap. For this reason South East Water recommends you use mains water for drinking and use your tank water for alternative purposes such as the garden.

What to consider before you purchase

The following are just some of the factors you will need to consider before you purchase a rainwater tank.

1. Tank size

In selecting the size of tank for your property you need to consider your 'rainwater yield', which is how much rain you can expect to capture. So you need to consider how often it rains, your roof area and match these to the tank volume and space you have for a tank.

2. Tank type

Rainwater tanks are available in galvanised iron, fibreglass, polythene or concrete. South East Water offers sealed tanks to protect your rainwater supply from contamination by insects and small animals.

3. Special needs

If you live in a bushfire zone, you should contact your local Country Fire Authority for information on how a rainwater tank can assist with bushfire protection.

4. Installation

In addition to selecting a tank that's right for your needs, you also need to ensure that it is installed correctly. In particular you need to ensure that you have appropriate council approvals (if required) and adequate safeguards to prevent any potential 'backflow'.

Easy Payment Options

At South East Water we understand that there is never a good time to install a rainwater tank. To make it easier, South East Water can offer a range of payment options including credit card and cheque.

Also, approved South East Water customers can pay by either fortnightly or monthly instalments over 12 months (interest free) in combination with their water bill charges*.

* Available to approved South East Water customers who own a property within South East Water's service boundary; excluding tenants. Only available on rainwater tank purchases with installation from South East Water Priority Plumbing. Payment must be by Direct Debit. Your existing and future estimated water bill charges will then become payable under this fortnightly or monthly Direct Debit arrangement too. To confirm your eligibility call our 24 hour customer service hotline on 132 812.

An Easy Way To Choose A Tank For Your Home

The easiest way to choose the right tank for your home is to contact South East Water Priority Plumbing on 132 812. For a fee, a licensed plumber will visit your property and advise you on your tank and installation options as well as how you may be able to make use of the water inside and outside the home. If you go ahead with ordering your tank and installation through South East Water we will deduct the Tank Advisory Service fee from your purchase price.

To arrange a Tank Advisory Service visit for your home call our 24 hour hotline on 132 812 today.

This fact sheet is provided for general information purposes only. For more information contact us on 132 812 or visit us at www.southeastwater.com.au

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