

Building and Plumbing Newsflash 527

Rainwater tank installation requirements (updated)

Purpose

To advise of installation requirements for rainwater tanks under the Queensland Development Codes (QDC) Part 4.2—Rainwater tanks and other supplementary water supply systems (for residential buildings) and Part 4.3—Supplementary water sources (for commercial buildings).

Background

Laws that required the installation of rainwater tanks (or other water supply systems) with new houses and commercial buildings where the property was located in a reticulated town water area were repealed on 1 February 2013. Housing providers and property owners can now choose to voluntarily install a rainwater tank.

Rainwater tanks can only be required to be installed with new houses and/or commercial buildings where a local government has been approved by the Minister to opt-in to the QDC.

Application

To ensure appropriate health and safety standards, the installation of all rainwater tanks must comply with performance requirements of the relevant QDC (as identified in Table 1 of the QDC). The QDCs are available on the Department of Housing and Public Works' website at www.hpw.qld.gov.au.

Voluntary installation requirements

Where a rainwater tank is voluntarily installed with a new or existing house or building, it is not required to have:

- a minimum tank size
- a minimum roof catchment area
- internal plumbing connections (to supply toilets and washing machines), and
- a continuous supply of water (NB. if the rainwater tank is connected to supply water to internal fixture(s) it is recommended that a continuous supply of reticulated town water be provided via an automatic switching device or a trickle top-up).

A rainwater tank can be installed for:

- outdoor use only (such as gardening and car washing), or
- both outdoor and indoor use (servicing internal fixtures such as toilets and washing machines).

Building and plumbing approvals

New house or building

Where a rainwater tank is included with a new house or building, it will be assessed as part of the building and plumbing approvals.

Existing house or building

Where a rainwater tank is connected for indoor use to an existing house or building, the plumber must lodge a [Form 4—Notifiable work](#) (as it is plumbed to internal fixtures that have connection to the reticulated town water supply). A Form 4 is not required where a rainwater tank is to be installed for outdoor use only.

For non-cyclone areas, a building approval is only required where a rainwater tank is greater than 10 metres squared in plan area and is more than 2.4 metres in height above ground. However, where it is smaller and shorter than these dimensions, it will not require a building approval.

Where a property is located within a tropical cyclone area (Wind Region C under AS/NZS1170.2 Wind Loading Code), a building approval is required with the installation of a rainwater tank regardless of its size. Wind Region C covers the immediate coastal areas from Bundaberg to the Queensland-Northern Territory border.

Local government planning and siting requirements

Inclusion of a rainwater tank on the property may also be subject to local government planning requirements for siting and boundary setbacks to correctly locate the rainwater tank on the property. For more information about rainwater tank installation requirements, contact your local government.

Requirements where a local government has been approved to opt-in

Local governments may apply to the Minister to opt-in to QDC 4.2 and/or QDC 4.3. Where a local government is approved to opt-in, all applicable performance requirements of QDC 4.2 and 4.3 will apply to rainwater tank installations in that council area. Details regarding approved local governments, including any variations, will be provided on the department's website.

More information

More details about rainwater tank installation requirements can be found using the search string 'water supply systems' on the department's website at www.hpw.qld.gov.au.

Contact for further information

Building Codes Queensland
Department of Housing and Public Works
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