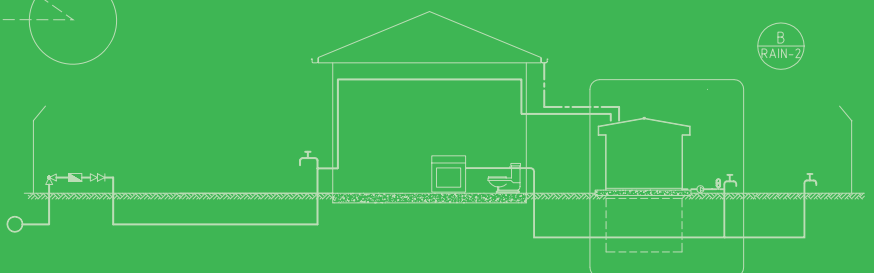


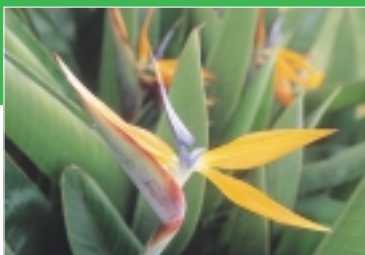


# Installing a rainwater tank

Congratulations on your recent decision to purchase a rainwater tank. Not only are you helping to conserve our precious drinking water, you may also save money on your water bills.



To ensure the installation of your tank goes smoothly, you will need to make some more decisions and follow a number of steps.



## Installing a rainwater tank

The first brochure in our series 'Buying a rainwater tank' will help you to decide on the appropriate size tank for your home.

You now need to choose the type of tank you are going to install.

### ■ Type of tank

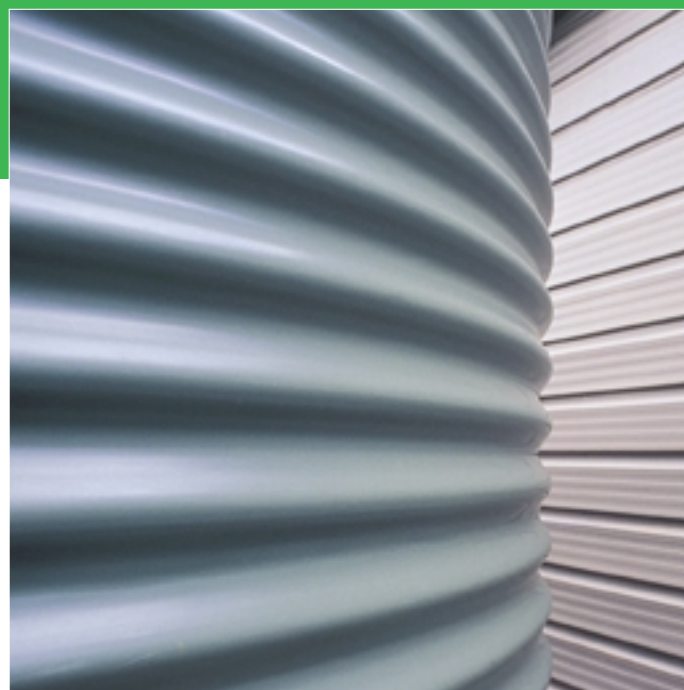
The type of rainwater tank you choose depends on a number of factors including budget and whether the tank will be above or below the ground. Tanks are available in a variety of materials.

**Polyethylene tanks** are durable, UV-resistant, light and easy to transport, available in many sizes and colours and suitable for both above and below ground installations.

**Metal tanks** are light and easy to transport, suitable for above or below ground use, can be custom made and are usually corrugated or coated steel.

**Concrete tanks** are durable, long lasting, usually built on site and can be located both above and below ground. They occasionally crack, particularly when they are below ground in clay soil, but concrete's light-resistant qualities prevent algal growth and keep water cool.

**Fibreglass tanks** are tolerant of extreme temperatures, resistant to rust and chemical corrosion, more suitable for above ground installations, lightweight, easy to transport and are available in a large range of colours and sizes.



**Roof tanks** – eaves guttering systems are designed to collect and store rainwater. The stored rainwater is used to flush toilets, fill washing machines, water gardens and wash cars.

Both ground tanks and roof tanks are eligible for Sydney Water's rainwater tank rebate.

### ■ Planning and building requirements

Once you have decided on the size and type of tank, you will need to find out about planning and building requirements in your area.

You should consult your local council before installing a rainwater tank. Tanks with a capacity of 10,000 litres or less generally do not require council approval, however, tanks are subject to certain government requirements such as location, colour, height, noise control, labelling of tank outlets and associated pipe work.

Do not install your tank in a Sydney Water easement or over a sewer maintenance structure. If the tank has a capacity of 10,000 litres or more, check with Sydney Water to ensure it is not located near a sewer main. Any overflow from the tank must run to the stormwater system, not the sewerage system.



## Installation requirements

The following requirements and recommendations will ensure your tank operates efficiently and our water systems and the environment are protected.

### ■ Plumbing work

If you are using the tank water indoors you will need to maintain the minimum water levels in your tank. A licensed plumber will need to connect a 'top-up' system from Sydney Water's mains supply, and your plumber can also assist with the following to meet Sydney Water guidelines:

- Install a flow restrictor to ensure the flow rate of water used to top-up the tank does not affect you or your neighbours' water pressure.
- Leave a visible 'air gap' between the pipe from the mains supply and the tank to ensure rainwater does not flow back and mix with your drinking water.
- Fit a proper backflow prevention device to your meter (see below).
- Label tank outlets and pipes as 'rainwater'.
- Make sure there is no connection between the pipes carrying the rainwater and the pipes carrying the mains water unless appropriate backflow prevention devices are installed.

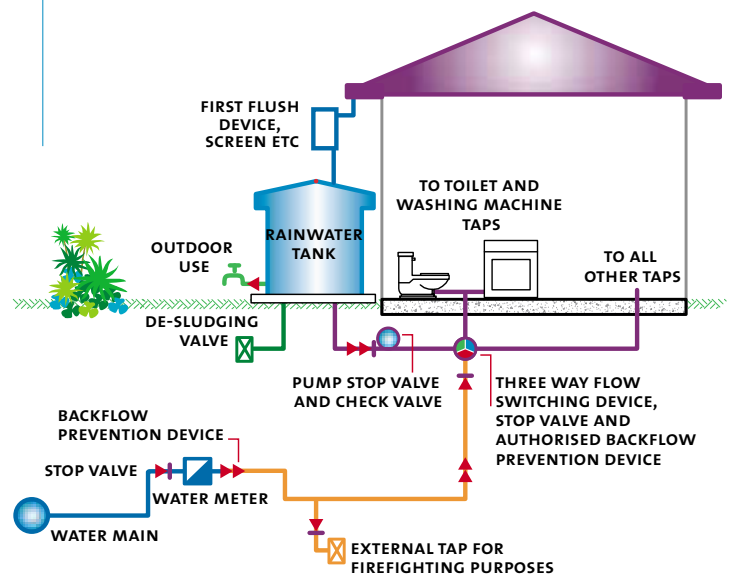
If you are installing an above ground tank and have a standard sized (20 or 25mm) water meter, Sydney Water will fit a new meter with a backflow prevention device free of charge.

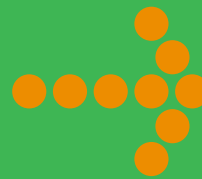
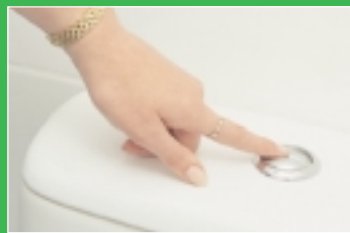
In this case, and if you have applied to Sydney Water for a rainwater tank rebate, you will receive a new water meter under the rebate application process. Otherwise phone 132092 and Sydney Water will install the new meter.

Residential customers installing underground tanks, property owners with large water meters (32mm+) and all commercial and industrial customers will need to install a backflow prevention device at their own cost.

Phone Sydney Water on 1800 680 636 for details.

**Residential rainwater tank connected to a 'top-up' system providing rainwater to outdoor, toilet and washing machine only.**





## ■ Pumps

If your tank is not sufficiently elevated to allow gravity to provide the required water pressure, you will need to install a pump. Your installer can advise you about the range of pumps on the market. Low voltage pumps are generally safer and quieter than high voltage pumps and are usually powered by a solar panel and battery system.

## ■ First flush devices, screens and guards

First flush devices and gutter guards are essential for reducing the amount of sediment and other materials entering the tank and polluting the water.

Use insect screens to cover all tank openings to prevent mosquitoes entering and breeding in the tank.

## Maintenance requirements

It is important to maintain your rainwater tank and components to ensure they work effectively and supply high quality rainwater.

Regularly clean your roof, gutters, first flush devices and insect screens of leaves, debris and overhanging tree branches. If mosquitoes are present, find out how they entered the tank and block their access.

Check the bottom and sides of your tank for sludge every two to three years.

If sludge is present, you will need to either siphon the sludge out or empty the tank.

Sediment in the tank may block your irrigation system or discolour your toilet cisterns and washing machine. Check the Yellow Pages for professional tank cleaners, if required.

## More ways to save water

To really do your bit to conserve water and maximise the savings on your water bill, Sydney Water recommends the following water saving devices and appliances:

- Install a AAA-rated showerhead to save around 11 litres of water per minute.
- Use tap timers and drip irrigation to reduce water wastage in your garden.
- Add a low cost trigger nozzle to your hose.
- Choose dual-flush toilets and a 4A- or 5A-rated washing machine.

Installing one AAA-rated showerhead can save as much as \$50 in water and energy costs, 21,000 litres of water and one tonne of greenhouse gas emissions each year. You will also reduce the amount of wastewater entering the sewerage system by up to 20 per cent.



# GO SLOW on the H<sub>2</sub>O



[www.sydneywater.com.au](http://www.sydneywater.com.au)





# GO SLOW on the **H<sub>2</sub>O**

## Need more information?

For more information on rainwater tanks and plumbing standards, please visit the Sydney Water website at [www.sydneywater.com.au](http://www.sydneywater.com.au)

For more information on rainwater tank health guidelines and maintenance, visit the NSW Health website at [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au).

Your local council can help with planning and building requirements.

OUR ENVIRONMENT  
*it's a living thing*



Printed on recycled paper  
SWC323 08/04

Sydney  
**WATER**