

Code updates

The world of rainwater harvesting codes is a fast-paced, constantly changing atmosphere. Currently, the two major code bodies, the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) and the International Code Council (ICC), are working diligently to create a national standard that provides a structure, or guideline, for the successful installation of a rainwater harvesting system. These two code bodies draw much of their expertise and guidance from the rainwater harvesting industry trade group, the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association (ARCSA). ARCSA has developed a standard for rainwater harvesting that both of these code bodies draw heavily upon in their own code documents.

The ICC has made significant progress in its commitment to the safe, effective re-use of rainwater through code developments that enable improved protection of our precious water resources. The International Green Construction Code (IgCC) was released in March of 2012. This code included a section dedicated to water efficiency and conservation. Currently this provision is a supplement to the code. The implications of the code being supplemental are relatively straightforward; at the moment it is more difficult for a city or municipality to adopt the standard than it is for them to leave it out of their construction code. This is because they have to opt-in to adopting the supplement. In 2015 this code will become a portion of the main code body. This means that in 2015 it will be significantly more difficult to exclude, rather than include this code section. Once the standard becomes a portion of the major code body it will become a national standard and the Code Council will perform its own training with city inspectors and officials. At this time the permitting of rainwater harvesting systems should become significantly more straight forward as officials will have written documentation, along with training, to refer to when inspecting a system.

Just recently the ICC has filed a project application titled ICC 805, the Standard for Rainwater Collection System Design and Installation, with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). This standard aims to build on the already substantial progress the ICC has made when it comes to rainwater harvesting code developments. This standard will apply to the design, installation, and maintenance of rainwater collection systems intended to collect, store, treat, distribute, and utilize rainwater for potable and non-potable applications. An expert committee is currently being recruited to weigh in on the code development. More information is expected regarding this standard in the coming months and years as the committee convenes and begins hashing out the future of the code.