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This guide aims to assist you in installing a rainwater tank within the guidelines set by Council. It includes current regulations, maintaining your tank after installation, and how to apply for a rebate.

Before you install the rainwater tank, if your property is connected to town water you are required submit a Rainwater Tank Compliance Checklist to assist in determining location, height, labelling of tank outlets, and any associated pipework, is in accordance with Council regulations.

Council's Compliance Regulations:

Connection to Internal Plumbing

Shoalhaven City Council and Shoalhaven Water has a responsibility to ensure that the drinking water supplied to our customers is maintained both in the Council mains as well as within the customer's property.

If the tank will be connected to the toilet and/or washing machine, it may require to be "topped up" from the town water to maintain a minimum level of water in the tank. This connection must be undertaken by a licensed plumber and will require an inspection by Council to ensure the connection meets the requirements of NSW Code of Practice: Plumbing & Drainage AS3500.

The top-up system will require a flow restrictor which will limit the flow rate to a trickle so as not to compromise the water pressure to you and your neighbours.

Further plumbing requirements may include:

- The overflow from the tank will need to be directed to the stormwater system. It must not discharge to Shoalhaven Water's sewerage system.
- All tank outlets and pipes carrying rainwater must be labelled "Rainwater".
- All plumbing work is to be done by a licensed plumber in compliance with these guidelines and the NSW Code of Practice: Plumbing and Drainage AS3500.
- Rainwater pipes must be separated from any parallel drinking water service.
- Above ground pipes must be a minimum of 100mm away from any drinking water pipe.
- Below ground pipes must be a minimum of 300mm away from any drinking water pipe.
- Backflow prevention devices must be installed at the property meter to protect the mains supply. Shoalhaven Water may update the water meter to include this device.
- A licensed plumber is required to carry out all work relating to the installation of rainwater tank systems.

Tanks requiring a Development Application

If your tank meets the any of the following criteria you may be required to submit a Development Application.

Follow the links to find out more

- [Rainwater Tanks](#) (above ground)
- [Rainwater Tanks](#) (below ground)

Fees will be applicable to any plumbing inspections or development applications.

Rebate Exclusions

Customers who are required to install a rainwater tank in order to comply with a condition indicated on a BASIX Certificate, a Development Consent, or a Subdivision requirement are not eligible for a rainwater tank rebate.

Pumps

A pump may be necessary to effectively operate some appliances including irrigation spray systems, solenoid valves in dishwashers, washing machines and cistern floats. Should this be the case then the pump will require regular maintenance.

Installation notes:

- Pumps must be secured firmly on a concrete plinth and kept under cover, and
- Consider the placement of your pump and sound proofing to reduce a potential noise nuisance for your neighbour.

Ongoing Tank Maintenance

Maintain your rainwater tank and components to ensure they work effectively so that it can supply high quality rainwater.

- Regularly clean your roof, gutters, first flush devices and insect screens of leaves, debris and overhanging tree branches.
- Install a first-flush device.
- 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 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.
- Leaf traps will reduce contamination and sealing the tank from light will discourage the growth of algae and bacteria.

Health

As rainwater falls from the sky, it's mostly free of micro-organisms and other pollutants. However, during collection and storage, it's possible rainwater can become contaminated. For this reason, NSW Health doesn't advise using rainwater for drinking when there's an alternative mains water supply available.

Find out more about rainwater tank health guidelines from NSW Health.

Applying for a Rebate

Before you apply for a rebate you must submit the Rainwater Tank Compliance Checklist and receive exemption verification from Council. Rebate applications will not be accepted without this.

Once you receive the exemption verification simply submit the online Rainwater Tank Rebate Request along with your exemption verification number and an electronic copy (jpg or pdf) of your purchase receipt.

Rebate applications must be submitted within 6 months of tank purchase.

Terms and conditions of the rebate program can be found in Shoalhaven Water's Rainwater Tank Rebate Policy.

For further information contact
Shoalhaven City Council
on (02) 4429 3211