



How to Maintain Drinking Water Quality in Your Rainwater Tank

This article is a summary guide on how you can maintain safe and fresh tasting rainwater compiled from the advice of Australian federal and state governments.

Rainwater from your roof is a valuable resource and safe to drink when stored in a safe, properly installed and maintained rainwater tank. If you will be using your rainwater for drinking and cooking purposes, then there are four areas you should be aware to:

1. [Rainwater Tank](#)
2. [Water Catchment Area](#)
3. [Tank Maintenance](#)
4. [Water Supply and Use](#)



1. Rainwater Tank

Water tanks can be constructed from a wide range of materials including polyethylene (plastic), steel (galvanised or stainless), Aquaplate®, Zinalume®, fibreglass and concrete. Rainwater tanks manufactured in Australia today are normally suitable for storing potable rainwater – that is, water safe for drinking and cooking purposes.

You should check that your polyethylene tank or poly lining in a steel tank is constructed from materials that comply with the Australian Standard 2070 – Plastics materials for food contact use. The manufactured tank should also comply with AS/NZS 4020 – Products for use in contact with drinking water

For more information, see [Choosing a Safe Water Tank for Drinkable Rainwater](#).

2. Water Catchment Area

The catchment area will normally be the roof of your home and/or sheds. Rain falls from the sky, water hits the roof and washes down into gutters that then direct water towards downpipes into your rainwater tank.

As far as your catchment area is concerned, there are two areas that should be considered:

1. **Roofing materials** – the material of your roof and/or any paints used.
2. **Roof contaminants** – leaves, debris, droppings (for example, from birds, bats, possums).

It is important to regularly inspect and clean your roof and gutters as necessary. Accessories like leaf eaters and water diverters will help maintain high water quality.

For more information, see [Collecting Safe and Drinkable Rainwater from Your Rooftop](#).

3. Tank Maintenance

To ensure the clear and safe drinking water quality, periodic cleaning of your rainwater tank, roof and gutters and inlet and outlet screenings is essential.

Tank maintenance should include:

- inspecting your roof, gutters, tank inlets and outlets, and screens every 6 months
- removing any leaves, droppings, dead insects and the like from your roof and gutters
- cleaning out your rainwater tank as necessary every couple of years.

If contamination is found or suspected, then remove the contamination as necessary and disinfect your tank water through appropriate chlorination.

For more information, see [Proper Water Tank Maintenance for Drinkable Water](#).

4. Water Supply and Use

When it comes to installing a rainwater tank, often more thought is put into what tank will be purchased rather than the actual plumbing.

To ensure rainwater is safely pumped into your house, remains of a high quality and refreshingly crisp, then you need to also choose appropriate tank fittings, connections and pipes. These should all comply with Australian standards (AS/NZS 4020 – Products for use in contact with drinking water).

For extra safety, you can bring your water to a rolling boil and then allow it to cool before drinking. Optionally, filtration can be installed at your taps to ensure high quality drinking water.

For more information, see [Plumbing in Your Water Tank for Safe Drinking Rainwater](#).

Further Reading

- [*Guidance on the use of rainwater tanks*](#), Australian Government Department of Health (2010)
- [*Your private drinking water supply*](#), Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services (2014)
- [*Use of rainwater tanks where a public water supply is available*](#), NSW Government Department of Health (2007)

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