

Tips for undertaking maintenance

Things to look for and how to fix them.

Leaf litter / debris in gutters	Pump not working
Regularly clear your gutters. Make sure you cover the tank inlet if you're rinsing down the gutters to avoid debris entering the tank.	Check operating instructions for your pump. Check that pumps are kept clear of surface water (flooding), vegetation, and have adequate ventilation. Pumps should be serviced every few years to prolong the pump life.
Blocked downpipe	Mains backup or pump not working
If you see water spilling from the edge of the gutters check that the downpipe is not blocked, removing any debris.	Have you heard the pump operating? If the mains backup switching device fails many people do not notice for a long time. Consider a manual system if the switching device is problematic and you don't mind operating it manually.
First flush diverter clogging	Overflow
To clean out, unscrew the cap at the base of the diverter and remove the filter. Wash the filter with clean water and the flow restrictor inside the cap.	Check that the overflow is not blocked and that there is a clear path for water to safely spill from the tank through the overflow pipe when full. Check that a clean mesh screen is safely in place to prevent mosquitoes entering the tank.
Debris on the mesh cover over inlets / outlets	Sediment / debris build-up in tank (more than 20mm thick)
The fine stainless steel mesh is similar to fly screen mesh. It should be cleaned regularly to ensure it does not become blocked with leaves and other material.	Over time a small amount of fine sediment will collect in the bottom of your tank and this is harmless and natural. It should not be disturbed until it is approx 20 mm thick which may take many years. To clean your tank out simply empty your tank and wash out with a high-pressure washer or hose.
Dirt and debris around the tank base or side.	Base area
Keep leaf build-up, sticks, pot plants and other items off the lid of your tank. Use a hose to remove dust and dirt from the outside of the rainwater tank and ensure there is no debris on the base, bottom lip and walls of your tank.	Tanks must be fully supported by a flat and level base. Check for any movement, cracks or damage to the slab or pavers. If damage is observed, empty the tank to remove the weight and have the fault corrected to prevent damage to the tank. There is no warranty from suppliers for damage to a rainwater tank if the base has failed.
Smelly water or mosquitos	Monitoring the water level
Rainwater tanks can smell if there is debris in the gutters. Check the gutters and leaf strainers are clean. Mosquitos or wrigglers can make their way into your tank if they are small enough to pass through the inlet strainer. A very small amount of chlorine (approx 4 parts per million) can be put in the tank to kill off mosquitos or the bacteria causing odours. The chlorine will disinfect the water and then evaporate. Chlorine tablets from a pool supplier can be used (but check the recommended dose based on your tank capacity).	A range of devices are available to monitor water level. Some simple float systems can be used effectively.

Acknowledgement: Information from PJT Green Plumbing's 'Maintenance Guide for Your Rainwater Tank' was used to develop this fact sheet.



Maintenance manual

Rainwater tanks

Site address: _____

Planning permit number: _____

Rainwater tank maintenance

This manual lists the key tasks required to maintain a domestic rainwater tank and the recommended frequency of each task. This manual can be submitted with planning permit applications for developments that include the installation of a domestic rainwater tank. Once endorsed, the property owner is responsible for continuous implementation of rainwater tank maintenance, in accordance with the guidance in this manual.

Rainwater tanks are an exceptional tool for environmental protection. They collect and store roofwater for use inside and outside the home. This simultaneously reduces the demand on our precious potable mains water and limits the amount of stormwater pollutants that enter our sensitive Bay.

Maintenance of rainwater tanks is relatively easy however it is important to do the following key tasks to ensure the quality of water is high:

- stop leaf litter and debris entering the tank.
- prevent bird droppings and dust building up in the gutters.
- prevent mosquitos and other animals entering the tank.

Tank connected to	toilet only <input type="checkbox"/> toilet & irrigation <input type="checkbox"/> toilet & laundry & irrigation <input type="checkbox"/> toilet & laundry & hot water & irrigation <input type="checkbox"/>
Rainwater tank location	
Planning drawing number showing rainwater tank location	
Rainwater tank construction date	
Date of final building inspection	
Tank volume (litres)	
Area or percentage of the roof that is connected to the tank via gutters and downpipes	

For more information please visit www.portphillip.vic.gov.au or contact the Sustainability team via:

Phone: 03 9209 6777

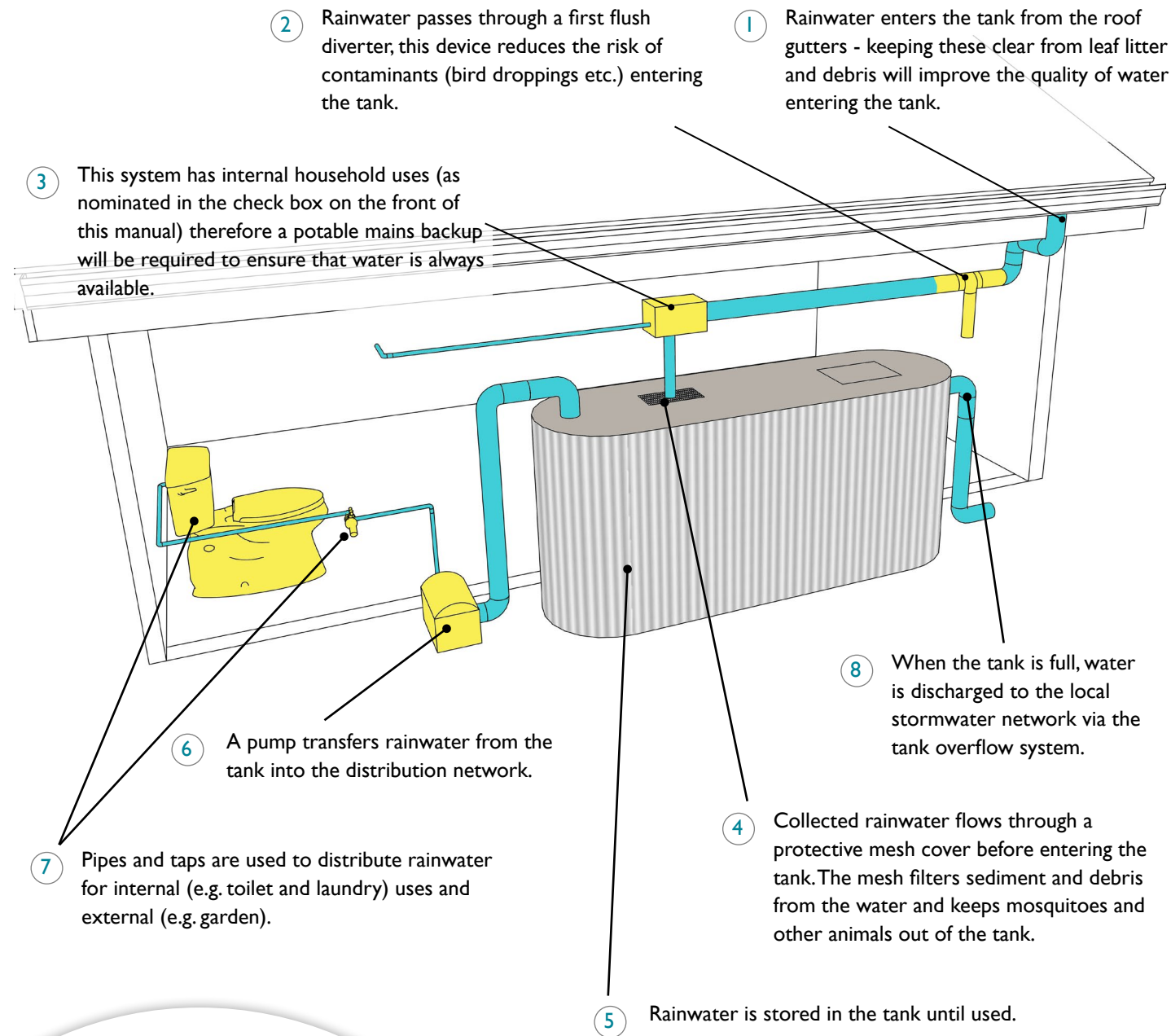
email: sustainabledesign@portphillip.vic.gov.au



Maintenance Overview

Rainwater Tank Maintenance

The following diagram identifies the key items which are important for rainwater tanks and their maintenance.



Maintenance Checklist

The property owner is responsible for checking the maintenance items in this checklist at the recommended frequency at the bottom of the table. The maintenance log at the bottom of the page should be filled in once each maintenance check is complete. Upkeep of this maintenance log should continue throughout the life of the rainwater tank.

Item	Rainwater tank element	Inspection item	Y/N	Likely maintenance task
1	Roof gutters and downpipes	Is there leaf litter or debris in the gutters?		Remove by hand and dispose responsibly.
2	First flush diverter	Is there anything blocking the first flush diverter (leaves etc)?		Remove by hand and dispose responsibly.
3	Potable mains back up device	Is the potable mains back up switch operating correctly?		Repair or replace device. Consider a manual switching device.
4	Mesh cover	Has the mesh cover deteriorated or have any holes in it?		Replace mesh cover.
5	Tank volume	Is there large amounts of sediment or debris sitting in the bottom of the tank, reducing the volume available in the tank to store water?		Remove sediment and dispose responsibly.
6	Pump	Is the pump working effectively? Have you heard it on a regular basis?		Check the potable mains back up is not permanently on. Repair or replace pump.
7	Pipes and taps	Are pipes and taps leaking?		Repair as needed.
8	Overflow	Is the overflow clear and connected to the stormwater network?		Remove blockages and/or restore connections to stormwater network.
9	Supporting base	Are there any cracks or movement of pavers?		Empty the tank to reduce weight then repair any damage to the base.

Maintenance frequency												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
All tasks	x			x			x			x		

Regular maintenance will improve the water quality and extend the life of your system. A well maintained tank isn't likely to need to be cleaned out for up to ten years (when there is more than 20mm of accumulated sediment).

Maintenance Log

Maintenance date	Maintenance undertaken

