

Rainwater Harvesting



Water resources in the UK

Conservation of water resources is high on the agenda for builders and developers when planning and building new homes or renovating properties.

Despite the fact that the UK appears to have plenty of rain, the growing population and changing climate mean that water resources are under pressure. The large number of new houses to be built over the next few years will increase the demand on available water between the environment and people. Reducing the demand for mains water can help to reconcile these competing needs.

What is a rainwater harvester?

It is a system which collects rainwater (usually via the roof and guttering), and then filters and stores it in a tank until required. Uses include toilet flushing, clothes washing, car washing, general cleaning and garden irrigation which would normally use mains drinking water.

It can be as simple as a water butt in the garden from which to fill a watering can, or a sophisticated below ground tank which supplies water automatically inside the home and switches to mains if the recycled rainwater runs out.

Recycled rainwater is not suitable for drinking and bathing, so separate mains water supply is still required for these uses.

Why should you recommend rainwater harvesting to customers?

By installing rainwater harvesting, up to 50% of the typical mains water consumption used in the home can be safely replaced by using recycled rainwater.

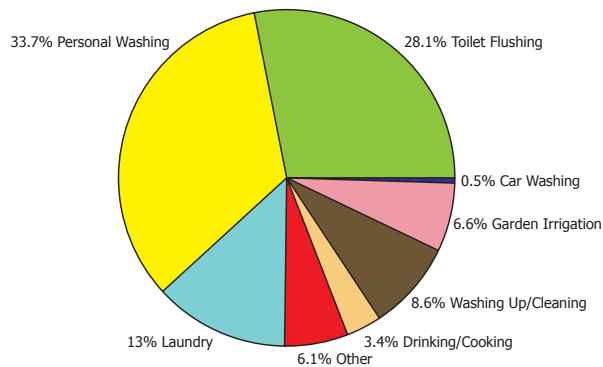
This can, according to **The Code for Sustainable Homes**, achieve a 6 star rating (the best) in the water efficiency category, by reducing the mains water consumption to less than 80 litres per person per day.

Water authorities also have the right to install water meters, which can increase water bills for some households. Rainwater harvesting can help control water consumption and rising bills.

The Environment Agency also promotes Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to alleviate the risks of flooding, which rainwater harvesting can help alleviate.

Guide to domestic water use in UK

(average per capita consumption)



Recommending the right type of rainwater harvesting system

What are the different types of systems?

- Above ground (water butts or tanks)
- Below ground (tanks)
- Mains water connected
- Internal/external use
- Direct feed or by header tank

Uses for recycled rainwater

- Toilet flushing
- Clothes washing
- Garden irrigation
- General Cleaning
- Car washing

Benefits for the end user

- Saving resources – money and water
- Beating hose pipe bans
- Sustainable homes

Sizing tank

- Budget
- Above or below ground
- Roof area or floor area of building where water will be collected
- Use, i.e: garden only (irrigation etc.) or garden and home (plus flushing toilets, laundry etc.)
- Number of people at the property
- Number of bathrooms/washing machines etc.

- New build (easier for below ground)
- Retro-fit (easier for above ground)
- High water table – may require different shape tank than usual
- Or refer to supplier for advice

Applications

- New builds
- Retro-fits
- Private sector new housing (Code level 3 will be mandatory from 2010, currently only an assessment is mandatory)
- Public sector new housing (Code level 3 is mandatory for social housing developments)
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Schools

What can be included in a rainwater harvesting system?

- Water butts, above or below ground tanks
- Filters
- Floatswitch
- Non-return valve
- Mains water switch
- Pump
- Vermin guard

Regulations/compliance

- Sell WRAS approved products
- Look out for BS8515 compliant products in the future
- Refer customers to The Code for Sustainable Homes

Add-on Sales

- Patio slabs
- Shingle/aggregate
- Cement/sand
- Hire – digger
- Landscaping/turf
- Plumbing
- Guttering

For further information on this subject and other BMF SELLING... guides please visit www.bmf.org.uk

**15 Soho Square
London W1D 3HL**

**Tel: 020 7439 1753
Fax: 020 7734 2766**

