

Rainwater harvesting info – Contamination sources / Roof materials

Rainwater is relatively free from impurities except those picked up by rain from the atmosphere, but the quality of rainwater may deteriorate due to chemical contamination. This type of contamination may be caused by pesticides and spray drift, flue or chimney emissions, roofing and tank materials, as well as traffic and industrial emissions (bigger concern in urban/industrial areas).

Some of the materials that collected water **cannot** be in contact with include:

- Uncoated lead flashings – lead flashings on existing roofs should be coated with suitable paint (coated lead paint is available for new roofs).
- Treated timber – chemicals leaching out might contaminate the water.
- Asbestos – although asbestos is no longer used in new building work, existing asbestos roofs should not be used for collecting rainwater.
- Bitumen, lead-based and other paints that do not meet required water quality standards.

Roofing materials that are suitable for water collection for human consumption must meet the requirements of AS/NZS 4020:2018. **Always check with the manufacturer.**

Arthur Travalloni
HEALTH AND WATER OFFICER

21 May 2021