

Rainwater system inspection and maintenance

Rainwater is relatively free from impurities except those picked up by rain from the atmosphere, but the quality of rainwater may deteriorate during harvesting, storage and household use. Wind-blown dirt, leaves, faecal droppings from birds and animals, insects, and contaminated litter on the catchment areas can end up in the water, leading to health risks from the consumption of contaminated water from storage tanks.

Besides that, allowing build-up of leaves and dirt in gutters and pipes can compromise the efficiency of your rainwater system. Blockages can prevent proper water flow, leading to substantial losses.

In order to avoid these issues, regular maintenance is essential. See below an example of a maintenance schedule that can be appropriate for your rainwater harvesting system. More information at www.yourhome.gov.au/water/rainwater.

Monthly:

- Check and clean tank inlet screens, outlet screens and leaf-shedding rain-heads.
- Check and clean the first flush diverter.

Every 3-6 months (depending on frequency of rain events):

- Check roofs and gutters and remove debris.

Annually:

- Check filters at least annually and replace if necessary.
- Inspect roof and remove overhanging vegetation where possible.

3–5 yearly:

- Desludge your tank.

In the longer term, rainwater pumps typically need servicing or replacing after approximately 10 years of use.

If you own a charged or wet system, consider inspecting and cleaning the charged lines at least every 6-12 months. This will help to prevent accumulation of sediments and organic matter, anaerobic fermentation in pipes, tannin leaching and blockages.

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