

FAQ's – Housing Developers – About Rain Water Harvesting

What is rainwater harvesting?

It is the collection of rainwater from roofs that would otherwise flow down gutters into the drain. Rainwater is stored in tanks for flushing toilets, washing machines, watering the garden, cleaning cars etc. and hosepipe bans do not apply to rainwater that has been harvested.

What can you use rainwater for?

Rainwater can be used for all outdoor uses: watering the garden, washing cars, cleaning patios, drives and windows, topping up ornamental ponds. It can also be used inside the house to flush WCs and washing machines.

Why should I use harvested rainwater?

Each person in the UK uses about 160 litres of drinking quality water a day. Nearly half of this amount need not be drinking water. It seems crazy to bring in drinking water from miles away via your water board to water your garden or clean your car when you could provide water directly from your own roof.

Is rainwater better than drinking water for outdoor use?

Your garden will prefer rainwater to tap water because it does not contain the chemicals needed to make tap water drinking quality.

How will rainwater harvesting help me during a hosepipe ban?

With the water being harvested you will still be able to wash cars, patios, boats, clean your driveways, top up your garden pond whilst you still have rainwater in your tanks. People that have no rainwater harvest can be liable for prosecution for the above in a hosepipe ban.

Will I save on my water bill if I have rainwater harvesting?

Yes just let your local water company know that you have fitted rainwater harvesting and they will adjust your bill accordingly.

Planning my Rainwater harvesting system

Does the tank have to be underground?

No our rainwater harvesting is stored in the roof space and therefore is gravity fed to the property. This does away with the need for ground workers, pumps, control panels etc. and most important no electric bills.

Does Atlas rainwater harvesting help with carbon emissions?

Yes once fitted in place it is the only truly 100% carbon neutral water harvesting system. Underground rainwater harvesting and surface rainwater harvesting systems require power to run their pumps creating carbon every day of the year, using electricity and creating a bill.

Do I need a large roof area to provide an adequate supply of water?

A surprisingly small roof area will collect a lot of rainwater. But the same size roof in different areas of the country will catch more in some areas and less in others dependent on the rainfall in that area. So by using British standards BS EN 12056 (part 3) we calculate your roof size with the correct amount of rainfall in your area to give the most cost effective solution.

How long would the water last in a drought?

Dependent on usage, but we would build a drought protection period of between 18 and 21 days into the system. We would have calculated your usage on your needs.

Do I have to have special roof tiles?

No. The rainwater catchers are specifically designed to work with all leading roof tile manufacturers.

Can I have a particular roof tile colour?

Yes. We produce our rainwater catchers to match all the leading roof tile manufacturers colours

Can the rainwater roof catchers work on the slate roof?

Yes. The system is designed to work with slates.

What else do I need besides a tank?

With our rainwater harvesting system we would supply everything needed for you to have the most efficient and effective system for your needs. In our package comes: rainwater storage tanks, Roof catchers, control tank, all pipes, fixtures and fittings. (Remember unlike traditional rainwater harvesting systems we require no pumps so no electric bills.)

What size pipes and fittings should I use?

We pride ourselves on keeping it simple we supply all pipework fixtures and fittings with our systems so no need to worry.

When do I need to use a filter?

A filter is recommended in every Rainwater installation and essential if the rainwater is going to be used in the house to stop the finer particles interfering with such things as ball valves. Dependent on system you are looking for we would then work out what filters are best for your individual system.

Is it expensive to replace the cartridge filter?

No. The cartridge filter only needs cleaning. This is a very simple job. The cartridge filter is taken out and simply washed under the tap and inserted back in to the fitting in no more than 3 to 4 minutes.

Does the pitch of the roof affect design and performance?

No. Each Atlas Rainwater Harvesting system is designed for that particular property, and therefore the pitch and size of the roof are all taken into account.

What happens when the system is full and overflows?

Great care has been taken in the design of our rainwater catchers; once our storage tanks are full our rainwater catchers will just overflow. The excess water merely runs down the roof and into the traditional guttering on the roof and is taken away in the normal way.

General

Can I still use a garden butt with the Atlas Rainwater Harvesting system?

Yes. There is a small part of the roof which is below the catchers this could be capturing water for the garden butt. Also at certain times of the year when the storage tanks full and the catchers overflow into a guttering allowing this water to be caught in the garden butt.

What is the best way to distribute water from the storage tank?

With our system being totally gravity fed distribution is very easy. We feed all the appliances direct from the storage tanks. If however you wish to wash the car, simply use the outside tap as this will be connected to the system.

How long does it take to fill the tanks?

Good question! It all depends on how much its raining and also different parts of the country have different rainfall amounts per year.

Can I use a lawn sprinkler with my rainwater harvesting tank?

Yes there are many low-pressure sprinklers on the market today. But be aware just how much water your average sprinkler can use.

Does all rainwater harvesting equipment come with all the right connectors

Yes. We have taken great care in designing our system. And all connections to our system are now standard fittings.

What advantages do we get under The Code for Sustainable Homes?

The Code for Sustainable Homes now puts pressure on developers to install rainwater harvesting in new-builds. A rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes, which measures nine categories of sustainable design including energy, water and waste, will be required for all new homes. Homes which exceed the sustainable standards in existing Building Regulations will be awarded up to code 6. Those homes that have not been assessed against the Code will score a nil-rating. Many councils are now giving planning permission only if the development scores between 3 and 5 against the Code.

Using rainwater in the house: Domestic systems

Can I use rainwater in the house?

Yes Atlas Rainwater Harvesting fit a system that fully complies to the latest legislation. You will be able to use the water in your washing machine, flushing the toilet, and for outside use. Building regulations in the United Kingdom do not allow harvested rainwater to be used in baths, showers, preparing food, or drinking water. The house is simply plumbed using the right water supply going to the right point.

Do I need to do anything if going and along holiday.

Yes just like it could practice to switch off the mains water, it's also a good idea if leaving on holiday for more than three weeks to drain down your water harvesting system. To do this simply switch off your mains water supply (normally situated under the kitchen sink) and open your outside tap. On your return simply close the outside tap and reopen your mains water supply. Your water harvesting system will be up and running immediately.

If I use rainwater in the house, what happens when my tank runs out?

With Atlas Rainwater Harvesting system the tanks never run dry. This is due to our automatic mains backup supply. A small amount of water will be allowed to continually feed into the system as and when required. But as soon as it rains again it will switch back to rainwater without you ever knowing the difference.

What is the power consumption of the of Atlas Rainwater Harvesting system?

Absolutely **nothing** unlike traditional rainwater harvesting companies we have no power to be consumed.

How loud is the Atlas Rainwater Harvesting system.

Absolutely no noise at all! Remember no pumps required so no noise and no electric bills.

Maintenance

Do I have to clear the leaves out of the filter?

No. Our system is design so that leaf build up cannot block the filters or enter our storage tanks.

Doesn't leaf debris or sediment get into the stored water?

A small amount of sediment will enter the tanks over a number of years. But the system is designed to cope with this.

Are the tanks guaranteed?

Yes. 15 years guaranteed with all our tanks.

What is the guarantee period for all other parts and labour?

All our systems come with a full 5 year labour and parts guarantee.

All about installation

What are the dimensions of the tanks?

This varies from installation to installation as we look at every property individually and assess its needs. At that point we will be able to give you the dimensions you require.

What weight would I need to account for in the roof space?

We liaison with your truss manufacturer to ensure that the loadings are in the correct position, and taken into account. Most of the time there is little or no cost involved in strengthening up the roof timbers.

What if Atlas pipework is above the height of the storage tanks does this need to be insulated?

No. Any pipework above the height of our storage tanks does not require installation as this pipework is either for overflow purposes or backwash. So water is not standing in these pipes.

How dose roof space rainwater harvesting compare with traditional rainwater harvesting?

With roof space rainwater harvesting we do away with many of the things associated with traditional systems. Like ground workers, holes in the ground, pumps, excess spoil going from site, Electricians, to name but a few. Most importantly we have no running costs.

Are the tanks and pipework insulated?

Yes but most developers put 400mm of insulation in the roof space and this goes over our pipework and tanks

Why install rainwater harvesting in the roof space?

Installing rainwater harvesting in the roof space has many benefits. Because the water is captured on the roof and directed into storage tanks in the roof space you require no pumps, no electrics, no costly control panels, no ground workers, these are just a few of the benefits.

What are my running costs?

Absolutely nothing. With no electric pumps we have **no electric bills**

If I buy a system what is included?

Everything! We supply the complete package from storage tanks right through to every piece of pipe and bracket.

What building regulations are applicable?

The client is responsible for complying with applicable building regulations which can be interpreted differently in parts of the country. Most building regulations for domestic use of rainwater harvesting require that a device must be fitted which prevents rainwater being able to feed back into the mains water.