

# Rainwater Harvesting

Keeping your  
system healthy





# Keeping your rainwater harvesting system healthy

It's great that you're harvesting your rainwater - it's a good way to save money on your water bill. But remember, the water you collect isn't suitable for you or your family to drink as it can contain harmful bacteria, which can make you ill.

Rainwater harvesting systems do need a bit of looking after to get the best out of them and shouldn't be confused with the collection of rainwater in water butts. We recommend giving your system a regular MOT check.

Here are our top tips for keeping your rainwater harvesting system healthy and safe.

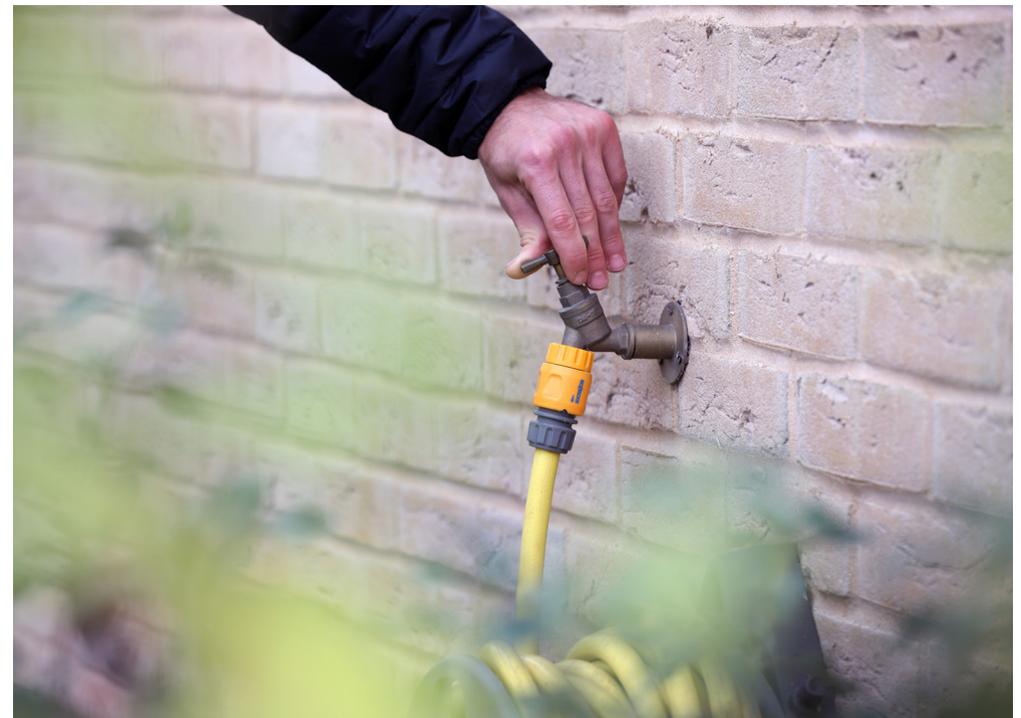
- ✓ Check the system regularly to see if the water in your tank looks murky or if it's starting to smell. If this is the case, contact the manufacturer to find a professional to check it and have it cleaned.



- ✓ If your cistern isn't filling, keep your toilets working by using a bucket of water to flush them or fill the cistern so you can flush it normally.
- ✓ Make sure the garden tap and pipes carrying rainwater in your house have been labelled to remind your visitors or tradespeople that it's not safe drinking water.



- ✓ Keeping your gutters clear of leaves, moss and other debris helps keep the rainwater cleaner.
- ✓ Have all filters (or UV disinfection units) serviced as per manufacturer's instructions. Prevention is better than a breakdown.



# Troubleshooting your system

Have you noticed any of the following?

- A funny taste or smell to your drinking water?
- A musty, stale or 'swampy' smell?
- Does your toilet water look dirty after flushing?
- Is the water in your washing machine not cleaning your clothes properly anymore?
- Is your system not labelled as it should be so you can't tell which pipes are from the rainwater system?
- Has your toilet stopped filling or working?



# What might be wrong

## Rainwater in your tank smells/ looks discoloured

- When the collection filters become blocked or broken, they can allow things like debris from your roof to get into the rainwater tank. These can then rot in the tank, causing the water to smell musty or look murky
- A poorly fitted inspection cover will let soil and other debris fall into the tank, making the water dirty
- When this organic matter breaks down in the rainwater tank, it can cause the rainwater to smell stale/musty or look murky



## The water in your house smells or tastes funny, or is discoloured

- You need to label the pipes and other parts of your rainwater system as a reminder that the water is not safe to drink
- If the rainwater system is cross-connected to your mains water plumbing system, it can let the rainwater mix with your drinking water. If you find this, get in touch with us immediately



## No rainwater

- If your inside filter becomes blocked or there's an electrical fault, like a pump failure, it will stop the rainwater being pumped to your toilets and garden taps
- If there isn't any rainwater, the mains back-up supply could have stopped working





## Keeping your water healthy: Do's and Don'ts

- If you have a water meter, check and read it regularly. If you notice an increase in the amount of water being recorded, the mains back-up water could be being used a lot more, especially if it hasn't rained. While this could be normal, it's worth checking to make sure it isn't due to a problem with your rainwater system.
- Check your normal plumbing system to make sure the rainwater system isn't directly connected to your drinking water.
- Make sure any mains water back-up goes through a properly-installed fluid category 5 air gap.
- If you've got a rainwater harvesting system and your drinking water tastes odd, please call us immediately so we can check it.
- If you have any problems with the system, contact the manufacturer.
- An approved plumber may be able to help you find the cause of the problem and advise you on what to do next.

### Finding an approved plumber

You can find a list of approved plumbers on the WaterSafe website: [watersafe.org.uk](http://watersafe.org.uk)

WaterSafe is a free online search facility supported by the water industry to help customers find competent and qualified plumbers in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

 Don't be tempted to connect the mains water system to your toilet's supply if the system breaks down - it's just too much of a risk to your drinking water. Leave it to the experts; always use an approved plumber and tell them you've got a rainwater system as they'll know how to fix it.

 Don't take off the pipe and system labelling. It's there to keep you and your family safe and also to let your plumber or other tradespeople know that the plumbing in your house has a rainwater harvesting system. 

 Never use rainwater to fill your swimming pool or children's paddling pool as the rainwater could contain harmful bacteria.



# Need some help?

If you'd like more information about rainwater harvesting or water quality, visit our website:  
[anglianwater.co.uk/rainwater-harvesting](http://anglianwater.co.uk/rainwater-harvesting)

Or call us on **0345 600 1063**.

## For non-household customers

We have a duty to protect the quality of your drinking water and to carry out Water Regulations inspections on your property. You may choose to contact your retailer for more information on how they can help you maintain your system correctly.

