Rainwater Harvesting – Shifting Regulatory Policies

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Rainwater
Shifting Regulatory Policies
Regulatory Issues

- Water Rights
- Consumer Safety
Water Rights

• Rivers & Lakes
• Aquifers / Wells
Who owns the rain?
97% of the rain that falls in Colorado does not make it to a river.
Is rainwater drinkable?
40,000 to 60,000 Hawaii homes use catchment
Water catchment systems are not recognized as potable water, and therefore not suitable for consumption in Hawaii. Because they are private systems, their maintenance and property rights are under the responsibility of the homeowner. For health and safety reasons, homeowners should not use rainwater for food preparation. Additional precautionary measures should be taken by rainwater catchment system users. Information on these as well as normal suggestions for rainwater catchment system usage is available online.

Precautionary Measures for Residential Rainwater Catchment Users During

The Department of Health (DOH) - Safe Drinking Water Branch currently regulates homes served by rainwater catchment systems. Owners or users of rainwater catchment systems are required to have their system tested once per year. Under this program, the owner or user of a "legal" catchment system must provide a sample to a participating analytical laboratory for testing of lead and copper levels. The owner must pay for the shipping of the sample and $25.00 for the analytical testing.
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“If we don’t regulate it
It can’t be safe.”
Guidelines on Rainwater Catchment Systems for Hawai‘i

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An estimated 30,000 to 60,000 people in the state of Hawai‘i are dependent on a rainwater catchment system for their water needs. The majority of those people are located on the island of Hawai‘i in the Puna, Ka‘ū, and Hāmākua districts. With proper design, maintenance, and water treatment, a rainwater catchment system can provide water that is relatively free of contamination, soft, clear, and odorless; this water can be used for drinking, bathing, washing, flushing, laundry, and gardening. But if the system is not properly designed and maintained, it can be a source of serious health risk and illness.

It is very important that those using water from a rainwater catchment system understand all of the potential problems, so government agencies have never noticed a problem with their water systems. This could be because they do not have any problems, but it may also be due to the fact that problems with water are not always obvious. Some problems may only show up too late. Some people using a rainwater catchment system...
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Vets caught in dispute over water catchment systems

By Derrick DePledge

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A typical rainwater catchment system comprises a steel tank with solid cover and access port.

A bureaucratic scuffle between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the state Department of Health is leaving veterans unable to qualify for VA loans or refinance existing VA loans at lower interest rates.

The VA is inclined to approve home loans on properties with rainwater catchment systems, while the state does not recognize the water as safe for drinking.
HAWAII GOVERNOR WON'T FIX HOME LOAN OBSTACLE FOR VETERANS
Rainwater Accredited
200 Level Water

Rainwater Harvesting:
System Planning
RAINWATER CATCHMENT

How to make a home rainwater catchment system safe for domestic use

- Rainwater catchment systems on individual homes are not regulated by the Department of Health (DOH). Home owners can use rainwater collected off their home’s roof can take action to help make the water safe for domestic use. To enhance health and reduce the need for treatment and corrective action, a catchment system should be well designed, regularly maintained, and periodically tested.

- Careful design and construction with the right materials is important to reduce the potential for chemical contamination. The system should be designed to protect against disease carrying animals.

- Regular and periodic maintenance, including cleaning of the system roof, tank, gutters, and filters will also reduce potential contamination.