

# Rain Barrel Guidelines and Application

Receive up to \$1.00 for every gallon of rain barrel storage capacity up to 400 gallons and \$400 per property. Barrel capacity cannot be less than 45 gallons or greater than 200 gallons.

## What is the value of a rain barrel?

Rain Barrels are used to collect rainwater from hard surfaces such as rooftops. When you install a rain barrel at your home, you are helping to conserve water by reducing the demand on the potable water system to irrigate your garden. You are also reducing the amount of wet weather runoff that is collected and sent into the public storm water system, which otherwise goes untreated into our bays and estuaries. The amount of water that can be collected from a rooftop depends on several variables, including the dimensions of the rooftop, the collection capacity, and the amount and the timing of the rain received. Before applying, calculate how much rain barrel storage capacity you need. Remember, San Diego typically receives around 10 inches of rain annually. The rainwater catchment rule of thumb is:



**1,000 square feet of roof surface captures 625 gallons of water for every 1 inch of rain that falls.**

## Application

1. **Take pre-installation photo:** Before installing rain barrel(s), take 1 clear photograph of where you plan to install your rain barrel.
2. **Install the rain barrel:** Purchase and install rain barrel(s) that meet the specifications set forth in the "Guidelines" section.
3. **Take post-installation photo:** After installing rain barrel(s), take at least 2 clear photographs of each new barrel, showing downspout connections, secured lid, and overflow valve (include photos taken from at least 2 directions).
4. **Submit** the [Rain Barrel and Downspout Redirect Application](#) and upload your supporting documentation.
  - ✓ All "before" and "after" installation photos (see Steps 1 and 3)
  - ✓ Paid invoices or sales receipts (must show price of each rain barrel, store name, purchase date, and payment method)
5. A [W-9](#) form must be submitted to the City to receive your rebate funds.

Please mail to:

City of San Diego Public Utilities Department  
Attn: Rain Barrel Rebate Program 525 B  
Street, Suite 300  
San Diego, CA 92101

Please be advised, emailing your W-9 form as an attachment is not a secured method.

## Guidelines

- Rebate for new rain barrels is \$1.00 per gallon of rain barrel storage capacity, up to 400 gallons. Example: A 55 gallon rain barrel = \$55 rebate (\$1 x 55 gallons). Rebate amount will not exceed the purchase price of the barrel and will be determined by the supporting documentation provided and available funding.
- Only the cost of the rain barrel(s) is eligible for a rebate.
- Multiple barrels may be rebated up to \$400 per property.
- **Rain Barrels must be a minimum of 45 gallons and maximum of 200 gallons.**
- If your HOA pays your water bill please have a board member sign your application as well. For HOA properties inquiring about purchasing for multiple units please see below under 'Other Important Information.'
- City of San Diego Public Utilities Department residential customers served by an individual water meter may participate in the rebate program.
- Manufacturer's installation and maintenance instructions must be followed.
- Rebate applies only to above ground rain capture devices that do not require pumps and backflow devices (no homemade barrels).
- Must be connected to a rain gutter downspout.
- Rain barrel must not be connected to the (potable water) irrigation system and must be distributed through a hose or bucket only.
- Rain barrel must not block or restrict narrow walkway or path around the home, which may become a safety/emergency access issue.
- **Rain barrel must be algae and UV-resistant or specially constructed sun barriers must be used. Rain barrel must be designed for the intended purpose of rain capture.**
- Copper materials (including downspouts) are not allowed due to potential leaching concerns.
- Overflow pipe from barrel must be directed away from buildings and/or adjacent properties and storm drains. Flow to landscape is preferred.
- Rain barrel must have a secure lid for child safety, vector control (mosquito, rodent), and debris control.
- Rain barrel must be maintained for a minimum of 3 years upon receipt of rebate.
- Participants must allow the City to reference the project in outreach materials and must respond to minimal requests for information about the project for purposes of program reporting.
- Customer must submit and agree to the online application agreement before a rebate is provided.
- A post-site inspection may be required by City Staff.
- Rebate check will be sent to the customer of record approximately 6-8 weeks after the application is deemed complete.

## Installation Recommendations

- Place the rain barrel on a raised foundation to accommodate a watering can and increase gravity flow.
- Consider placement of the outlet pipe/faucet at a maximum of 6 inches from the bottom of rain barrel.
- Rain barrel should be placed on a solid and level foundation, such as concrete pad, pavers, or brick for stability.
- Consider securing your rain barrel with straps similar to hot water heater earthquake straps, or per manufacturer recommendations.
- Consider limiting the height: width ratio of the rain barrel to 2:1 to prevent instability.

## What does not qualify for a rebate?

- Barrels purchased prior to January 1, 2018.
- Labor, fuel, or tools costs.
- Costs associated with fixtures or components used to install or secure rain barrel.
- Homemade rain barrels.
- Taxes, fees, or tariffs associated with the purchase of rebate-related device or work performed.

## Other Important Information

If you are an HOA seeking to purchase barrels for your community, the \$400 maximum per detached single family home or one per multi-family building applies, but we do require one application per community to be filled out. In addition to the photograph, receipt, and application requirements, please submit with your on-line application a list of the account numbers with addresses associated with each account number that you are requesting for a rebate. All other parameters and requirements above apply to each address.

Please consult with a tax advisor if you have questions regarding any potential tax implications of your rebate.

If you have questions after reading these guidelines, please call 619-533-4126 or e-mail [waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov](mailto:waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov). Include your project reference number if you have one.

Funding for rebates are available through the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department and Transportation and Storm Water Department, and will be distributed on a first come, first served basis until exhausted. This program is subject to change without prior notification.

Please visit Metropolitan Water District at [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com) to determine if you are eligible for an additional rain barrel rebate.