

New allowances for cisterns

The N.C. Building Code Council recently approved additions to the state's plumbing code that allow the installation of cisterns for rain water collection and the reuse of water collected in cisterns for flushing toilets and urinals and for irrigation. Ratification of Session Law 2009-243 (HB 749) authorized changes made in the plumbing code to facilitate the use of cistern water in both residential and commercial buildings. The law prevents any state, county or local building code or regulation from prohibiting the use of cisterns for these applications.

Changes made by the council have added Appendix C-1, Rainwater Recycling Systems, which has new requirements for rain water connections, collection reservoir, filtration, overflow and makeup water related to the use of cistern-collected rainwater for flushing toilets and irrigation.

Rainwater entering a cistern must pass through an approved filter strainer to prevent such nuisance conditions as mosquitoes breeding and odors from decaying detritus. For use in toilets and urinals, the water must also be disinfected and dyed blue or green. This requirement protects public health by making the water easily identified as non-potable.

Although the promulgated version of Appendix C-1 shows a delayed effective date set for Jan. 1, 2011, subsequent ratification of Session Law 2009-243 (HB 749) on June 25, 2009, made the new plumbing code revision effective immediately.

Appendix C1, Rainwater Recycling Systems, can be found on the [North Carolina Department of Insurance Web site](#).

[Note: Appendix C-1 does NOT apply to the use of gray water (the water collected from household sinks, tubs, showers and clothes washing machines) which was covered in provisions to Appendix C, Gray Water Recycling Systems, which were previously adopted as part of the 2006 N.C. Plumbing Code.]



Cistern located at the Prairie Ridge education facility for the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences is used to flush toilets within the facility.