

Rainwater Harvesting for State Government Facilities

In 2009 amendment of law and subsequent plumbing code addendum defined rainwater harvesting systems, and expanded use of this efficiency option can further reduce potable water consumption. The N.C. Legislature passed Session Law 2009-243, authorizing the state building code to permit the use of cisterns to provide water for flushing toilets and for outdoor irrigation. S.L. 2009-243 excerpt:

The Code may include rules pertaining to the construction or renovation of residential or commercial buildings and structures that permit the use of cisterns to provide water for flushing toilets and for outdoor irrigation. No State, county, or local building code or regulation shall prohibit the use of cisterns to provide water for flushing toilets and for outdoor irrigation. As used in this subsection, 'cistern' means a storage tank that is watertight; has smooth interior surfaces and enclosed lids; is fabricated from nonreactive materials such as reinforced concrete, galvanized steel, or plastic; is designed to collect rainfall from a catchment area; may be installed indoors or outdoors; and is located underground, at ground level, or on elevated stands.

In response to S.L. 2009-243, the N.C. Building Code Council added Appendix C-1, Rainwater Recycling Systems, to the N.C. Plumbing Code, which has specific requirements for rain water connections, collection reservoir, filtration, overflow and makeup water for cisterns used for flushing toilets and urinals. These requirements protect public health by making the water easily identified as non-potable. Note: Although Appendix C-1 shows a delayed effective date of Jan. 1, 2011, subsequent ratification of State Law 243 made the new plumbing code revision effective immediately.

In 2009 Session Law 2009-474 transferred authority for building code enforcement with respect to state buildings from the Department of Insurance to the Department of Administration. Plan review and inspection of state buildings is the responsibility of the State Construction Office (SCO).