



INFORMATION SHEET NO. 35

WATER TANKS – LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

How do I know if I need to install a water tank to comply with legislation?

The legislation that the Council is obligated to apply when assessing a Development Application is the legislation in place at the time of lodgment.

If requirements change after the date of lodgment, it will not apply regardless of the stage of construction. There are some exceptions to the rule, however if you are in any doubt, please check with the staff from the Development & Regulatory Services Department of the Light Regional Council.

What water tanks are required by legislation and why?

Water Retention for use on the site – minimum 5000 litres

This has been incorporated into the Council's Development Plan and has been in place since at least 5 June 2003. The wording of the council wide principle states:

Development should be designed so that as much stormwater as possible is retained on the development site through the application of an appropriate range of the following techniques:

- *the collection of roof run-off in rainwater tanks and provision of at least one tank of 5000 litres per dwelling;*
- *the use of rainwater for domestic purposes;*
- *the direction of roof run-off onto garden areas;*
- *the design of paved areas so that stormwater is directed onto garden areas; and*
- *incorporating pervious parking area surface materials.*



The requirement for a 5000 litre tank may be applied to any residential development and is likely to be imposed as a condition of Planning Consent.

Water Efficiency – minimum 1000 litres

There is a requirement throughout South Australia incorporated in the Building Rules for a minimum size tank to collect water from the roof of a dwelling and then plumbed back to the dwelling for use. The Building Code of Australia and the South Australian Housing Code requires:

*A minimum 1000 litre tank is required to collect roof surface water from a minimum of 50m² area of roof.
The water tank must be plumbed for use to at least a water closet or a water heater or all laundry cold water outlets.*

This requirement is triggered by an application for Building Rules Consent for a new dwelling or an addition to an existing dwelling (since 1 May 2006) and is required to be installed and connected prior to the occupation of the dwelling or addition (since 1 May 2008).

Bushfire Fighting – minimum 5000 litres

If the building work taking place is located within a designated or proclaimed bushfire risk area, then there is a requirement to provide a static water supply of a minimum of 5000 litres. The Light Regional Council Development Plan was amended to include the changes made by the State Government on 18 January 2007, which states:

Residential, tourist accommodation and other habitable buildings should:

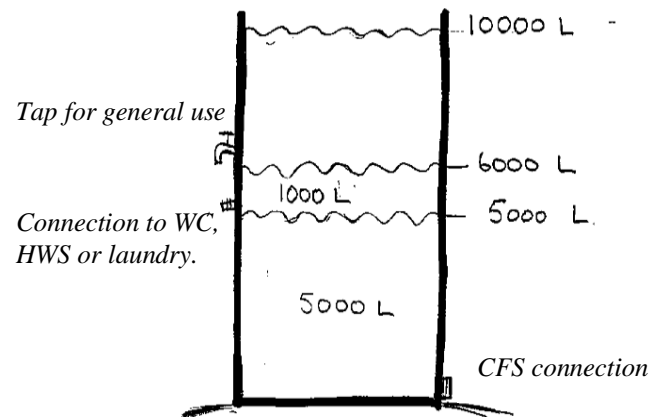
- a) *be sited on the flatter portion of allotments and avoid steep slopes, especially upper slopes, narrow ridge crests and the tops of narrow gullies, and slopes with a northerly or westerly aspect;*
- b) *be sited in areas with low bushfire hazard vegetation and set back at least 20 metres from existing hazardous vegetation; and*
- c) *have a dedicated water supply available at all times for firefighting which:*
 - i) *is located adjacent to the building or in another convenient location on the allotment accessible to fire fighting vehicles,*
 - ii) *comprises a minimum of 5000 litres in areas shown as General or Medium Bushfire Risk on Bushfire Protection Area figures; or*
 - iii) *comprises a minimum of 22 000 litres in areas shown as High Bushfire Risk on Bushfire Protection Area figures.*

Whilst there are other requirements relating to developments within Bushfire Risk Areas (such as location, construction materials, tank pumps and couplings etc), the Light Regional Council Development Plan does not currently include any High Bushfire Risk areas.

What if I do not want to purchase and install multiple tanks?

With planning and discussion with the tank manufacturer, you may be able to provide one large tank. For general use or connection to the dwelling, an outlet will be required above the 5000 litre capacity point to ensure that a minimum of 5000 litres of water is always available for fire fighting purposes. The remaining capacity of the tank must be a minimum of the balance of the required tanks.

For example: a site requires a minimum of 1000 litres plumbed to the house, 5000 litres for use on the site and 5000 litres for fighting bushfires. The 1000 litres can be incorporated in the 5000 litres used on site therefore a minimum tank size is 10000 litres. Provide a tap and connection to the dwelling half way up the tank above the 5000 litre mark and this will ensure that water use on the garden or home does not deplete the minimum amount required if there is a need to assist with bushfire fighting.



What if I have limited space on my property to install tanks?

Slim line tanks are available or smaller tanks may be installed provided they are connected together at the base such that they fill at the same time and the sum of the individual capacities of the tanks are equal to or greater than the minimum size required.



*Please note the information contained herein is intended as a guide only.
Further clarification may be obtained by contacting the Council on 8525 3200.*