



STORM WATER CONTAINMENT SYSTEMS (RAIN BARRELS, RAIN TANKS & HOLDING STRUCTURES)

INTRODUCTION

This bulletin provides information concerning the use of storm water containment systems relative to the requirements of LABC Section 7013.10, which regulates site drainage. Containers that receive and discharge storm water may include barrels, tanks, cisterns or concrete holding structures.

Storm water containment systems are often part of the pollution control measures required by City Municipal Code (LAMC 64.72) for new development and construction that create or replace more than 500 square feet of impervious area. These measures are part of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the Low Impact Development (LID) Ordinance that are administered by the Watershed Protection Division of the Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN). Captured storm water can be used for irrigation and other non-potable water use. In addition to pollution control, these measures can help reduce municipal potable water consumption.

REQUIREMENTS

Rain barrels, tanks, and other holding containers require an over flow mechanism that does not discharge toward buildings, adjacent property or slopes. Overflow shall be conveyed in non-erosive devices to an approved drainage device or facility including public streets (LABC 7013.10). If drainage does not flow by gravity, a sump pump system may be necessary. Sump pumps are subject to approval from the LADBS Grading Division and may require a Request for Modification of Building Ordinances (RFM). Use of dispersal walls to convert concentrated drainage to sheet flow over slopes may be considered on a case by case basis. Dispersal walls require a geologic/soil report specific to the wall location. Refer to LADBS Information Bulletin P/BC 2023-103 for sump pump use and dispersal wall systems.

Rain barrels or holding tanks (depending on the size and load), shall be placed on level ground at least 10 feet away from the top of a slope. If this is not possible, a geology/soils report will be required to determine the stability of the slope.

RELATED CODE REQUIREMENTS

Construction of storm water containment systems are subject to Chapters 11 & 17 of the City of Los Angeles Plumbing Code, a separate Plumbing permit is required.

For specific information regarding LID BMPs, LASAN may be contacted at 213-482-7066 or www.lastormwater.org/green-la/low-impact-development/lid-documents/.