



## Rain Barrel Uses and Safety



Not for  
drinking or  
in-door use



Prevent  
mosquito  
breeding



Prevent tipping  
and secure  
barrel lids

### Safe Rain Barrel Use

- Maintain the screen to prevent mosquito breeding
- Keep the lid sealed and child safe
- Install strapping to prevent tipping
- Release stormwater slowly and safely
  - Do not concentrate flows onto erodible soil areas
  - Drain to a well vegetated, stable, non-eroding area using drip tape or soaker hose
  - Direct overflow back to an under drain or safe dispersal area

### Placing Your Rain Barrels

- Place barrels at least 5' from the Public Right of Way (ROW)
- Place barrels on a flat, well drained area, away from erodible soil areas
- Place barrels on a stable base, such as on blocks, bricks, pea gravel, sand, or a level concrete surface
- Use strapping to prevent tipping
- For slopes averaging 3:1 or gentler (horizontal distance to vertical rise), place the barrel at least 5' away from the edge of a natural break in slope (without a retaining wall)
- For steeper slopes, use retaining wall and terracing built with structural elements such as blocks (un-reinforced or reinforced) as needed to create a flat, stable area. Consult with an engineer for your specific site requirements. Terraced slopes can also be used to slow water velocity and create more surface area for infiltration.

## Consider the weight of the full rain barrels:

Size	Full Weight
65 gal	554 lbs
200 gal	1740 lbs

## Discharge and Drainage

(See Oakland Municipal Code OMC15.04.660)

- Overflow may not discharge over the public right of way
- Discharge stormwater runoff away from structures, foundations, and neighboring property
- Do not concentrate flows (disperse them over a broad area)
- Diffuse the flow using drip tape, a soaker hose, flow spreader or diffuser
- Direct overflow back to an under drain or safe dispersal area

## Maintenance and Cleaning

- Keep your rain barrels clean of debris
- Maintain the screens to prevent mosquito breeding
- Clean your rain barrels yearly with non-toxic cleaner such as vinegar

## Local Information and Resources

- American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association (ARCSA):  
[www.arcsa.org](http://www.arcsa.org)
- The Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District: Mosquito breeding prevention tips [www.mosquitoes.org](http://www.mosquitoes.org)
- Low Impact Development Center, Inc.:  
[www.lowimpactdevelopment.org](http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org)
- Watershed and Stormwater management Program:  
watersheds@oaklandnet.com
- Urban Farmer:  
[www.urbanfarmerstore.com](http://www.urbanfarmerstore.com)  
(510) 524-1604

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