



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Commercial Plan Review

Rainwater Harvesting Ordinance

GET READY FOR COMMERCIAL RAINWATER HARVESTING ORDINANCE!!!

On October 14, 2008, the City of Tucson Mayor and Council adopted the Commercial Rainwater Harvesting Ordinance No. 10597, the first of its kind in the country. The ordinance takes effect June 1, 2010, and applies to all new commercial construction.

Since its adoption, the Commercial Rainwater Harvesting Ordinance has been receiving attention as a model for cities and communities across the United States who are considering similar ordinances. These new rules are part of Tucson's effort to promote water conservation and efficient use of water resources by the City and its residents.

The code changes for Commercial Rainwater Harvesting require:

1. Facilities subject to the ordinance must meet 50% of their landscape demand using harvested rainwater, prepare a site water harvesting plan and water budget, meter outdoor water use, and use irrigation controls that respond to soil moisture conditions at the site.
2. Facilities have 3 years to establish plants before the 50% requirement must be met, and the requirement is waived during periods of drought.
3. The details of how facilities will comply with the Commercial Rainwater Harvesting Ordinance are contained in the Commercial Rainwater Harvesting Development Standard. Both passive water harvesting systems (systems that passively infiltrate rainwater into soil or porous pavement for use by vegetation), and active systems (systems that store water in tanks for future distribution to beneficial uses) are addressed in the Development Standard. Applicants may choose the water harvesting system or combination of systems that is most appropriate for their site. In general, commercial sites in Tucson should be able to meet 50% of the landscape water demand using passive water harvesting systems alone.
4. The Ordinance and Development Standards can be found at:
<http://www.tucsonaz.gov/ocsd/sustainability/water/rainwaterharvesting.php>