

CISTERN

Qualifying for a Cistern Credit

Installing a cistern would collect the runoff from rooftops and prevent it from entering the sewer system. Collected rain water can then be used for irrigation, watering plants or supplementing greywater needs. Cisterns can be located above or below ground. While cisterns are similar to rain barrels in function, they are larger and generally more sophisticated in operation, possibly with filtering/treatment of inflow, pumped outlet, flushing mechanism, level sensors or other controls, and bypass piping. To qualify for a Cistern Credit, the following requirements must be met:

- the runoff from at least 50% of the main home's roof area must be collected by the cistern
- the cistern shall be at least 66 cubic feet (500 gallons) in size, and should consider the demand for the intended uses
- cisterns are generally watertight, and are equipped with screens, seals or other appurtenances to prevent mosquitos from entering or algae growth
- cisterns installed above ground shall be located at least 10 feet away from basement walls
- overflow from the cistern shall not be directed onto paved surfaces that provide a direct connection to the sewer system, or onto adjacent properties
- provide a plan of the roof area of the home, and the location of the proposed cistern
- provide the manufacturer and model number of the cistern to be installed (if applicable)
- plumbing and electric permits may be required from the Building Department
- property owner is responsible for maintaining the cistern and keeping it in working order

More information on Capture Reuse (cisterns) can be found in Chapter 7 of the LID Manual for Michigan, published by SEMCOG.