XIV.4. Harvest and Use BMP Fact Sheets (HU)

HU-1: Above-Ground Cisterns

Cisterns are large rain barrels. While rain barrels are less than 100 gallons, cisterns range from 100 to more than 10,000 gallons in capacity. Cisterns collect and temporarily store runoff from rooftops for later use as irrigation and/or other non-potable uses. The following components are generally required for installing and utilizing a cistern: (1) pipes that divert rooftop runoff to the cistern, (2) an overflow for when the cistern is full, (3) a pump, and (4) a distribution system to supply the intended end uses.

Feasibility screening consideration, opportunity criteria, design criteria, etc. for this BMP are listed below under HU-2: Underground Detention.

Above-Ground Cisterns
Source: Sunset Publishing Corporation

HU-2: Underground Detention

Underground detention facilities are subsurface tanks, vaults, or oversized pipes that store stormwater runoff. Similar to cisterns, underground detention facilities can store water for later use as irrigation and/or other non-potable uses.

Underground detention tank
Source: www.webtecgeos.com

Feasibility Screening Considerations

- The primary feasibility considerations for harvest and use systems for stormwater management is the presence of consistent and reliable demand that is sufficient to drain the systems relatively quickly between storms. **Appendix X** provides guidance for calculating harvested water demand.
- Use of harvested water should not conflict with applicable plumbing and health codes at the time of project application.

Opportunity Criteria

- Cisterns may collect rooftop runoff, and if located underground, may collect ground-level runoff.
- Cisterns may be installed in any type of land use provided space is available and adequate water demand exists.
- Stored water may supply non-potable water use demands such as irrigation and toilet flushing.
- Cisterns and underground detention facilities may also be used for peak flow control if active storage volume and hydraulic controls are provided above the retained storage or systems are operated with advanced controllers.

OC-Specific Design Criteria and Considerations for Above-Ground Cisterns

☐ Cistern systems should include prescreening in the form of screens on gutters and downspouts to remove vegetative debris and sediment from the runoff prior to entering the cistern.

- ☐ Above-ground cisterns should be secured in place and comply with applicable building codes.
- ☐ Above-ground cisterns should not be located on uneven or sloped surfaces; if installed on a sloped surface, the base where the cistern will be installed should be leveled and designed for the weight of the filled cistern prior to installation.
- ☐ Child-resistant covers and mosquito screens should be placed on all water entry holes.
- ☐ A first flush diverter may be installed so that initial runoff bypasses the cistern.
- ☐ Above-ground cisterns should be installed in a location with easy access for maintenance or replacement.
- ☐ Plumbing systems should be installed in accordance with the current California Building and Plumbing Codes (CBC – part of California Code of Regulations, Title 24).
- ☐ When a potable water supply line is connected to a cistern system to provide dry-season make-up water, cross-contamination should be prevented by providing a backflow prevention system on the potable water supply line and/or an air gap.
- ☐ In cases where there is non-potable indoor use demand, proper pretreatment measures should be installed such as pre-filtration, cartridge filtration, and/or disinfection.

OC-Specific Design Criteria and Considerations for Underground Cisterns/Detention Systems

- ☐ Access entry covers (36” diameter minimum) should be locking and within 50 feet of all areas of the detention tank.
- ☐ In cases where the detention facility provides sediment containment, the facility should be laid flat and there should be at least ½ foot of dead storage within the tank or vault.
- ☐ Outlet structures should be designed using the 100-year storm as overflow and should be easily accessible for maintenance activities.
- ☐ For detention facilities beneath roads and parking areas, structural requirements should meet H-20 load requirements.
- ☐ In cases where shallow groundwater may cause flotation, buoyant forces should be counteracted with backfill, anchors, or other measures.
- ☐ Underground detention facilities should be installed on consolidated and stable native soil; if the facility is constructed in fill slopes, a geotechnical analysis should be performed to ensure stability.
- ☐ Plumbing systems should be installed in accordance with the current California Building and Plumbing Codes (CBC – part of California Code of Regulations, Title 24).
- ☐ When a potable water supply line is connected to a cistern system to provide dry-season make-up water, cross-contamination should be prevented by providing a backflow prevention system on the potable water supply line and/or an air gap.
- ☐ In cases where there is non-potable indoor reuse demand, proper pretreatment measures should be installed such as pre-filtration, cartridge filtration, and/or disinfection.

Types of Harvested Water Demands

Harvested rainwater can be used for irrigation and other non-potable uses (if local, State, and Federal ordinances allow). The use of captured stormwater allows a reduced demand on the potable water supply.

Irrigation Use

- Subsurface (or drip) irrigation should not require disinfection pretreatment prior to use; other irrigation types, such as spray irrigation, may require additional pretreatment prior to use
- Selecting native and/or drought tolerant plants for landscaped area will reduce irrigation demand, thereby reducing the needed size of the storage facility and the amount of tributary area that can be successfully managed with a harvest and use system.

Indoor Use

- Indoor uses generally require filtration and disinfection and should only be considered if permitted by local, State, or Federal codes and ordinances.
- Domestic uses (single-family uses) may include toilet flushing.
- Offices, commercial developments, and industrial facility indoor uses may use cisterns for toilet and urinal flushing. Demands for these specific land uses are include in Appendix X.
- Pretreatment requirements per local, State, or Federal codes and ordinances should be applied

Other Non-Potable Uses

- Other non-potable uses may include vehicle/equipment washing, evaporative cooling, industrial processes, and dilution water for recycled water systems (if local, State, and Federal ordinances allow)
- Pretreatment requirements per local, State, or Federal codes and ordinances should be applied

Harvested Water Demand Calculations and Feasibility Thresholds

Appendix X provides guidance for estimating harvesting water demand and determining whether demand is potentially sufficient to provide a significant benefit for stormwater management.

Simple Sizing Method for Cisterns

If the Simple Design Capture Volume Sizing Method described in **Appendix** III.3.1 is used to size harvest and use systems, the user calculates the DCV and determines whether demand is sufficient to drain the tank in 48 hours following the end of rainfall. The sizing steps are as follows:

Step 1: Determine Cistern DCV

Calculate the DCV using the Simple Design Capture Volume Sizing Method described in **Appendix** III.3.1. This is the required cistern size.

Step 2: Determine the 48-hour Required Demand

Calculate the daily demand needed to draw down the DCV in 48 hours using the following equation:

$$Demand_{48} = (DCV/2)*7.48$$

Where:

$Demand_{48}$ = daily demand required (gal/day)

DCV = design capture volume, cu-ft

Use the guidance in Appendix X determine the non-potable uses needed to generate the required demand.

Designing Cisterns to Achieve the Maximum Feasible Retention Volume

It is rare that cisterns can be sized to capture the full DCV and use this volume in 48 hours. However, if the demand exceeds minimum harvested water demand thresholds, cisterns should be sized to achieve at least 40 percent capture of average annual runoff volume.

Step 1: Determine if the Project Meets the Minimum Harvested Water Demand Thresholds

Determine the Project's design capture storm depth, then use the TUTIA thresholds table (**Appendix X**) for indoor uses, or the Irrigated Area thresholds table (**Appendix X**) for outdoor uses, to determine whether the project meets the minimum harvested water demand thresholds. If the project does not meet the minimum harvested water demand thresholds, harvest and use does not meet the minimum incremental benefit required to such that its use must be evaluated. .

If the project meets or exceeds the minimum harvested water demand thresholds, continue to Step 2 **or** Step 3 (equally-allowable pathways).

Step 2: Iteratively Determine the Cistern Volume for 80 percent capture of average annual stormwater runoff volume

Cisterns can be sized using the Capture Efficiency Method for Volume-Based, Constant Drawdown BMPs (See **Appendix III.3.2**). This approach requires an iterative sizing process in which the user selects the initial cistern size and the project harvested water demand, then calculates the time required for the cistern to drain. Based on the drain time, the cistern size is increased or decreased and the calculations are done again until the initially assumed size and the required size are within 10 percent.

a. Calculate wet season harvested water demand using guidance contained in **Appendix X**.

b. Select cistern size in terms of the design rainfall depth.

c. Calculate the cistern volume using hydrologic method described in **Appendix III.1.1**.

d. Compute the drawdown time of the cistern as:

   Drawdown Time (hr) = [Volume (cu-ft) × 7.48 gal/cu-ft× 24hr/day]/[Demand (gpd)]

e. Based on design rainfall depth and drawdown time using guidance provided in **Appendix** III to calculate long term average capture efficiency.

f. If capture is between 75 and 85 percent, further iterations are not required.

g. If capture is less than 80 percent capture of average annual stormwater runoff volume, return to Step (b) and increase design rainfall depth.

h. If capture is greater than 80 percent, return to Step (b) and increase design rainfall depth.

Step 3: Determine Cistern Volume and Drawdown to Achieve Maximum Practicable Capture Efficiency

The applicant is not required to provide a cistern greater than the DCV to demonstrate that BMPs have been designed to achieve the maximum feasible retention. The following steps should be used to compute the maximum feasible fraction of stormwater than can be retained with harvest and use BMPs:

a. Calculate wet season harvested water demand using guiance contained in **Appendix X**, accounting for all applicable demands.

b. Calculate the DCV using hydrologic method described in **Appendix III.1.1** and size the cistern for this volume.

c. Compute the drawdown time of the cistern as:

   Drawdown Time (hr) = [Volume (cu-ft) × 7.48 gal/cu-ft× 24hr/day]/[Demand (gpd)]

d. Based on 1.0 × design capture storm depth and the drawdown time computed in Step I, calculate the long term average capture efficiency using the Capture Efficiency Method for Volume-Based, Constant Drawdown BMPs (See **Appendix** III.3.2).

e. If capture efficiency is less than 40 percent, harvest and use is not required to be considered for use on the project.

f. If capture efficiency is greater than 40 percent, provide a cistern sized for the DCV and provide volume or flowate to treat the remaining volume up to 80 percent total average annual capture using biotreatment BMP.

Configuration for Use in a Treatment Train

- Cisterns can be combined into a treatment train to provide enhanced water quality treatment and reductions in the runoff volume and rate. For example, if a green roof is placed upgradient of a cistern, the rate and volume of water flowing to the cistern can be reduced and the water quality enhanced.
- Cisterns can be incorporated into the landscape design of a site and can be aesthetically pleasing as well as functional for irrigation purposes.
- Treatment of the captured rainwater (i.e. disinfection) may be required depending on the end use of the water.
- Cisterns can be designed to overflow to biotreatment BMPs.

Additional References for Design Guidance

Santa Barbara BMP Guidance Manual, Chapter 6: http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/91D1FA75-C185-491E-A882-49EE17789DF8/0/Manual_071008_Final.pdf

- County of Los Angeles Low Impact Development Standards Manual, Chapter 5: http://dpw.lacounty.gov/wmd/LA_County_LID_Manual.pdf
- SMC LID Manual (pp 114): http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/guest75/pub/All_Projects/SoCal_LID_Manual/SoCalLID_Manual_FINAL_040910.pdf

San Diego County LID Handbook Appendix 4 (Factsheet 26):

http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/LID-Appendices.pdf