

POL-1017

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY WATER RESOURCES PROGRAM  
POLICY AND INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT

**COLLECTION OF RAINWATER FOR BENEFICIAL USE**

Effective Date: 10/09/2009

Contact: Policy and Planning Section

References: *Statute:* Chapters 90.03 and 90.54 RCW

Purpose: To (1) clarify that a water right is not required for on-site storage and use of rooftop or guzzler collected rainwater, and (2) identify the Department of Ecology's intent to regulate the storage and use of rooftop or guzzler collected rainwater if and when the cumulative impact of such rainwater harvesting is likely to negatively affect instream values or existing water rights.

Application: This Interpretive Statement applies to the water right permit requirement in RCW 90.03 and the authority to regulate rainwater harvesting systems.

**This policy supersedes any previous policy statement with which it conflicts.**

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**The on-site storage and/or beneficial use of rooftop or guzzler collected rainwater is not subject to the permit process of RCW 90.03.** If and when the department determines that rooftop or guzzler rainwater harvesting systems are likely to negatively affect instream values or existing water rights, local restrictions may be set in place to govern subsequent new systems. To qualify as rooftop collected rainwater, the roof collecting the rainwater must be part of a fixed structure above the ground with a primary purpose other than the collection of rainwater for beneficial use. A guzzler is a device used to catch and store rainwater to provide drinking water for wildlife, livestock or birds.



Jay J. Manning, Director  
Department of Ecology

**Note:** These policies and procedures are used to guide and ensure consistency among water resources program staff in the administration of laws and regulations. These policies and procedures are not formal administrative regulations that have been adopted through a rule-making process. In some cases, the policies may not reflect subsequent changes in statutory law or judicial findings, but they are indicative of the department's practices and interpretations of laws and regulations at the time they are adopted. If you have any questions regarding a policy or procedure, please contact the department.

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