



Seattle
Public
Utilities



King County

Be RainWise

Manage your rain water at home

RainWise Updates

As we wrap up another successful if challenging year I would like to send a sincere and heart-felt thanks to our RainWise Contractors. My tenure with the program will end in just a few days and it has been an absolute honor and pleasure to be a part of such an amazing and effective program. I retire in January and over my 25+ year career with the City of Seattle, RainWise has been both the most challenging and rewarding program I have ever been associated with. We are doing great work and RainWise has become a model for the rest of the nation. I am proud of my work over the past several years and know that none of it could have been possible without the efforts of our valued contractors. Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

But never fear! There is a new program manager who started in December. We are really excited to welcome Natasha Bailey who will be filling in for the next 9 months as the SPU Program Manager for RainWise! Natasha comes to RainWise from SPU's Drinking Water Line of Business. She was born and raised in Seattle, went to Western Washington University Huxley College of the Environment and has been with SPU for over 5 years on resource conservation programs. She may seem familiar to some of you as Natasha worked with the Rainwise program in 2017 and 2018 leading outreach efforts in SPU's CSO basins in South Seattle! Very unlike your current intrepid RainWise PM, Natasha teaches mountaineering and alpine climbing classes. She lives in South Seattle with her husband and dog. Welcome Natasha!

Tom Gannon

ASK AN INSPECTOR

Q

I'm unclear as to where a cistern can be placed on a client's property. Can you explain the rules to me?

A

We here at RainWise cannot blame you for being confused. We have received confirmation from the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection (SDCI) regarding code compliance. The actual code is at [SMC.23.44.014.C.17](#).

In short, the code says that a cistern may be placed anywhere in a yard without restriction if it is:

- Under 4.5 feet tall and
- Under 4 feet wide and
- The total capacity of all above grade GSI features is under 600 gallons

If a cistern exceeds any of the above dimensions, then it cannot be placed:

- Within 3 feet of a side lot property line or
- Within 15 feet of a front lot line or
- Within 20 feet of a rear lot line, or if there is an alley or an unopened right of way, within 20 feet of the centerline of that alley or unopened right of way.

Please note that this only applies to single family properties.

Contact Us

Always feel free to contact Rainwise at rainwise@seattle.gov or contact Natasha directly at natasha.bailey@seattle.gov or at (206) 684-5855.

New RainWise Rebate Paperwork

We always encourage RainWise contractors to check out what's new on the Contractor Resources page of 700milliongallons.org website at <https://700milliongallons.org/rainwise/contractor-resources/>. If you haven't checked it out in a while please do! We have all new RainWise Rebate paperwork and we need all contractors and their clients to start using them. The revised RainWise Rebate Paperwork Forms are now offered electronically (!!!) for contractors and customers and are a huge timesaver and upgrade from previous versions. Once the forms are filled online, they should be compiled by contractor or homeowner and emailed to rainwise@seattle.gov. Paperwork that is mailed to our physical address will take more than twice as long to process.

Cisterns

Cistern supply continues to be an ongoing issue for RainWise. A separate City department, Financial and Administrative Services (FAS) has begun a new bidding process. If successful, this process will allow both King County, Seattle Public Utilities (and virtually any other department or public agency) to purchase a steady supply of cisterns without running up against City purchasing limitations that exist when there is not a purchasing agreement. This has been a slog and we appreciate your patience.

Some contractors have reached out to us asking about non-standard cisterns. We do not have a prohibition against using non-standard cisterns, but any cistern must meet RainWise specs. If you wish to use a non-standard cistern please submit the specs to us at rainwise@seattle.gov.

Design Details

The RainWise Design Details update is still in process! There's a lot to consider here and, as it is something that both agencies and our engineers need to agree with, it is taking a while. By and large, there will be no drastic changes. We are focused more on clarifications, some robust construction elements (especially to installations accessible to the public) and updating various codes, code requirements and links.

It's that time! Fill out the 2022 Contractor Survey

It is that time again, when we ask you to fulfill **continued participation requirements** of the RainWise Program. When you take the [Annual RainWise Contractor Survey](#), you'll confirm all of your current contact information, upload a 2022 City of Seattle business license and current WA State Contractor license (if needed), and finally answer a few questions about your business practices and your experience with RainWise. **This must be done by March 1st, 2022** in order to be listed as an active RainWise contractor. Here are some helpful [Contractor Resources](#).

We'll make sure all of your contact info is correct on our website and print materials. We'll use your business practices information to help prospective customers narrow down their choices for a contractor who will work best for them. You'll want us to have all of your details! We also take account of your feedback about the program as we start planning for the next year.

Has your business stalled due to weather? It's the perfect time to take a few minutes to do the survey!

Tips for new contractors: *Think about what you have to offer that stands out from others. Do you have a short waitlist? Do you have expertise in permaculture, edibles, natives? Do you build hardscapes, decks? You can let us know about all of this in the [Contractor Survey](#).*

Want to Meet New Customers? Sign up at tinyurl.com/RWcontractor

If you no longer want to be part of the RainWise Program, please email rainwise@seattle.gov.