



## Rural Water Authority

of Douglas County

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P.O. Box 4610  
Parker, CO 80134

### ***Well Water Conservation & Rainwater Collection*** **Well Owner Information #6**

Conserving well water drawn from Denver Basin aquifers is vital to extending the life of this nonrenewable resource, especially in rural areas. Rooftop rainwater collection is a form of conservation that can help supplement your domestic well water supply. On July 1, 2009, the passage of Colorado Senate Bill 09-080, a new law allowing [Rooftop Precipitation Capture](#) for property owners with certain types of wells, became legal.

Prior to SB09-080 rainwater collection was not allowed. The State of Colorado claims the right to all moisture in the atmosphere that falls within its borders and is the property of the people of the state under the law of prior appropriation or "first in time, first in right." Diverting any state water, including rooftop rainwater, is based on this law and the seniority of a water right, which we discussed in Newsletter #2 on Water Rights.

Under SB09-080, rural residential property owners who rely on exempt, small capacity wells for their water supply can collect and use rooftop rainwater under specified conditions:

- The property owner uses a well, or is legally entitled to a well, for the water supply.
- Rainwater collection is only allowed on residential property.
- No water supply is available from a municipality or water district.
- Rainwater is collected only from the roof of a building that is the primary residence.
- There is no limit to the amount of water collected from the rooftop of the primary residence
- The water is used only for those residential uses allowed by, and identified on, the well owner's permit. Depending on the permit, this may include both indoor and outdoor uses.
- The well owner has applied for and obtained a [Precipitation Collection Permit](#). For qualified rural property owners with a well, this permit is free.
- If your well has not been registered with the State, you need to [Register an Existing Well](#) before applying for the above permit.

**Interesting Fact:** Just a half inch of rain falling on a 1,000-square-foot roof will yield 300 gallons of water!

Rain barrels or other types of water storage structures are allowed, including above ground or underground cistern storage for household use. Your exempt well permit dictates how collected rainwater can be used. For example, if the permit stipulates "ordinary household use" (no outside use), then it would NOT allow for car washing and could NOT be used to fill an outdoor hot tub. If the well permit allows household and outdoor uses, including lawn and garden irrigation and/or animal watering, the rainwater could also be

used for those purposes. The [Colorado Division of Water Resources](#) has detailed information on rainwater collection under SB09-080 and Colorado State University has a helpful fact sheet on [rainwater collection in Colorado](#).

### **How Your Well Permit Affects Rainwater Uses Allowed**

While securing a permit to collect rainwater is free to qualified rural property owners, how you use the collected rainwater is strictly determined by the uses allowed under your specific well permit. If you don't have a copy of your well permit, you can find it by searching the CDWR's [well permit](#) system.

#### **Resources for Rainwater Collection Systems**

[American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association](#)

[Blue Barrel Rainwater Catchment Systems](#)

[Conservation Technology: A Rainwater Handbook](#)