

Rain barrels are now legal to use in Colorado
How to use rain barrels in Colorado

In May, Gov. Hickenlooper signed House Bill 16-1005 legalizing the use of rain barrels to capture rainwater from rooftops. HB 16-1005 includes specific rules which must be followed in order to legally use rain barrels. The basic rules are outlined below:

- Rain barrels can only be installed at single-family residences and multi-family residences with four or less units
- Only two rain barrels are allowed at each household
- The two rain barrels cannot exceed a combined storage capacity of 110 gallons
- Rain barrels or other containers used to capture the rainwater must have sealable lids to prevent them from becoming mosquito breeding areas
- Only rainwater from rooftop downspouts can be captured
- The captured rainwater may only be used on the same property from which it was captured
- The captured rainwater may only be used for outdoor purposes, including watering outdoor plants, gardens and lawns
- The captured rainwater cannot be used for drinking or indoor water uses
- Homeowner's Associations cannot ban the use of rain barrels by its members, but they can impose "reasonable" aesthetic requirements on the location and/or appearance of the barrels

An additional tip to prevent mosquito breeding and stagnant water: The rain barrel(s) should be completely emptied at least once a month. If you are planning to be away from home for more than a week the rain barrel should be disconnected from the downspout.

For more information the Colorado Stormwater Center and the Colorado Water Institute have created a [fact sheet](#) about rainwater collection in Colorado.