

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH WATER TANKS RESIDING IN THE BUSH FIRE AFFECTED AREAS

INTRODUCTION

Bushfires generate large amounts of smoke, debris and ash.

There is a possibility of contamination to your tank water from the debris or ash being washed off the roof and into your rain water tank when it rains.

If debris, smoke and ash present on your roof it indicates that the first flush of water will not be suitable for drinking.

If you have been hosing down your roof as part of your fire plans, or if it has already rained, these contaminants may have already washed into your tank.

WHAT CAN I DO TO MY RAIN WATER TANK TO REDUCE CONTAMINATION FROM A BUSHFIRE?

Install a first flush diverter between the roof and the tank to prevent ash and other debris contaminating the water. These are available from most hardware stores and suppliers of rain water tanks.

WHEN CAN I START USING MY RAIN WATER TANK FOR DRINKING WATER PURPOSES?

Regardless of whether your tank needs cleaning or not, you still need to clean the roof to prevent contamination by debris entering the tank. Use the first flush diverter on your rain water tank to divert any residual debris away from your drinking water storage.

If you don't have a first flush diverter, disconnect the inlet from the roof to the tank until the roof has been cleaned of debris.

When safe to do so, arrange to clean debris from the roof and gutters before it rains. Be cautious when doing this to prevent injuring yourself.

Further information

- The brochure "Your Private Drinking Water Supply" provides information that is designed to help keep your supply of drinking water safe and healthy, including advice about how to disinfect with chlorine. It can be downloaded from :
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/water/tanks.htm>