

# City of Peoria Rain Barrel Program

## INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS

### Find a place for your Rain Barrel

- Find a downspout on your house, garage or shed that can be altered to connect to the barrel.
- Place your barrel in a location that is convenient for your intended use. If you intend to water your garden, place the barrel on the downspout closest to your garden, for example.
- Choose a downspout where you can best manage the overflow so that it soaks into your yard in a place that will not cause damage to you or your neighbor's property.

### Build Your Base

- The ground below the barrel will likely get soggy. It is recommended to use something such as a concrete block to provide a sturdy base.
- Elevating your barrel creates better water pressure and makes the bottom spigot more easily accessible. Use something such as concrete blocks, patio blocks, or a pedestal to raise the barrel.

### Connect Your Downspout to Your Rain Barrel

Note: If you purchased a rainwater diverter, refer to those instructions.

- Place the barrel on the base at the chosen location.
- Line up the elbow piece of the downspout at the elevation needed to direct the water into the barrel.
- Mark the downspout using a straight edge and pencil.
- Cut the downspout at your mark using a saw, tin snips or similar tool. **Caution: The edges will be sharp.**
- Install the angled portion of downspout and align it with the screened opening on the barrel.
- Save the extra pieces from your downspouts. You may use these to replace your downspouts if you chose to store your barrel in the winter months (see "Winterizing").



### Connecting Multiple Barrels

- To connect multiple barrels, connect a hose from the overflow valve on the first barrel to the connector valve on the second barrel. Once the first barrel is full, the water will flow into the next barrel. There is no limit on the number of barrels that can be connected together.

### Managing Overflow

Once the barrel is full, the water will overflow from the top of the barrel. Excess water can damage the foundation if the barrel is placed too close to the building.

- A rainwater diverter can be installed on the downspout. Once the barrel is full, the water will back up into the diverter then out through existing downspout or drainage system.
- Connect a hose to the overflow valve and direct the water away from the foundation.
- Place the barrel in a location where overflow will not cause damage.

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### Using Rain Barrel Water

- Water your garden, flower beds and lawns.
- Rinse off tools and muddy boots.
- Wash your dog or car.
- Do *not* drink the water from your rain barrel.

### Maintenance

- Keep the spigot closed so that the barrel can collect water.
- Keep the lid affixed tightly to block mosquitoes, animals or children.
- You will, occasionally, want to rinse out the barrel to clear debris that has collected on the bottom. This will be necessary no more than once a season. It is convenient to rinse it out at the end of the fall when you prepare your barrel for the winter (see “Winterizing”).

### Winterizing

Freezing and thawing water in a full barrel will cause the plastic to expand and contract. This will cause the fixtures to leak in the spring.

- Before temperatures drop below freezing, drain the barrel and leave the fixtures open so that water does not collect in the barrel.
- There may be a small amount remaining in the bottom, but this will not harm the barrel and will provide added weight to keep the barrel upright.
- When it rains, water will flow into the barrel and out through the spigot. You may also disconnect the barrel completely and replace the downspouts so that water will flow through the downspouts and out.

### Mosquitoes

- The screen at the top of each barrel should prevent mosquitoes from breeding.
- If you believe mosquitoes are breeding in your barrel, empty it completely. This will kill the mosquito larvae.

### Additional Resources

Upcycle Products  
400 East Wapella Street  
Minooka, Illinois 60447  
Phone: (815) 735-9583  
<http://www.upcycle-products.com/>

Cristin Robertson  
City of Peoria Public Works Department  
419 Fulton Street, Room 307  
Peoria, Illinois 61602  
(309) 494-8833