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Unauthorised Use of Fire Service Water Supplies V2

Fire and Security Consulting Services (FSCS) is often consulted regarding the use of water supplies designed for use in fire services. Fire hydrants, hose reels, sprinkler systems and the like are provided for fire fighting purposes only. Using this equipment for other purposes may cause it to be damaged and thus ineffective when required for its intended purpose.

Where the water supply is purely private, i.e. is sourced from rain water collection and stored in an on site tank, there are no restrictions on the use of the water, save for ensuring that the design quantity of water is maintained. Figure 1 shows such an arrangement.

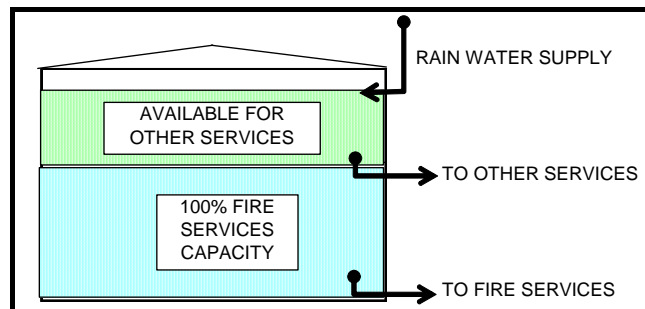


Figure 1 – Private Water Supply

Where the fire services are from the Municipal “towns main”, there are two design options, a direct connection to the town main and / or tank storage fed from the town main.

In either case the water supply is from a source supplied under the authority of the regional water supply provider which requires all connections to their supply to be metered.

Part 4 Section 145 (page 113) of the (Queensland) Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 (extract below) prohibits the use of water from a fire fighting system without the permission of the service provider. Accordingly the use of fire hose reels and hydrants is prohibited for purposes other than fire fighting.

Penalty units are currently (01-07-2014) \$113.85.00 each. So unlawful use can attract a penalty of \$113,850.00 unless permission is obtained from the water service provider.

145 Water to be used only for fire fighting purposes

- (1) A person must not take water from a fire fighting system or a service provider’s hydrant without the permission of the service provider unless the water is taken for fire fighting purposes.

Note—

Under the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*, section 53(2)(h), the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service may take water for fire fighting purposes from any source whether natural or artificial.

Maximum penalty—1000 penalty units.

I trust that this information is helpful.

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