Storage Tank and Cistern Maintenance

Water infrastructure, including water storage systems, require regular maintenance, specifically suited to the on-site water system. The frequency will vary depending on the system. In general, water tanks and cisterns should likely be cleaned out and shock chlorinated at least once per year. This frequency will increase if water quality problems occur.

Washing and Sludge Clean-out

Cisterns and storage tanks should be regularly inspected, cleaned and periodically shock chlorinated to disinfect the tank (Shock chlorination is a term used when applying high concentrations of chlorine disinfectant for maintenance purposes - this water should not be consumed.)

For safety reasons, do not enter any cistern or tank as there may be dangerous concentrations of hazardous gases or insufficient oxygen, that could result in death. All cisterns or tanks are considered and regulated as a "confined space," which poses severe dangers to human or animal life. Improper entry into confined spaces have resulted in human fatalities from hazardous gases or low oxygen levels. No one should enter a cistern to perform maintenance unless they are properly trained in confined space entry and properly equipped with the air testing, ventilation and rescue equipment. Proper confined space entry procedures should be used at all times. No matter how clean the cistern or tank may appear, these dangers are not able to be detected by human sight or smell.

The homeowner should only undertake those activities that do not require entry into the cistern or tank. For example, after emptying, the walls may be washed down with a garden hose, wand or a pressure washer, while working from outside the tank. The wash water can be removed using a submersible pump and discharged into an open outside area. This may have to be done more than once to adequately remove material that has settled in the cistern.