

DJB makes Water recycling must for hotels and other bulk users

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NEW DELHI: In a major move to shore up the city's water table that's falling alarmingly, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on Thursday made it mandatory for all the properties with an area of 100sq metres and above to have functional rainwater harvesting systems, with strong penal provisions for defaulters.

DJB, which amended the water and sewer (tariff and metering) regulations 2012 to include this provision, also made waste water recycling mandatory for bulk users in new properties. While properties built after the cut-off date of July 28, 2001, will need to install water-harvesting system by March 31, 2020, older houses will be given one year from the date of the public notice to comply. Defaulters will have to pay 1.5 times their water bill amounts.

An official explained why the cut-off date of July 28, 2001, had been set. "In July 2001 the rainwater harvesting (RWH) provisions were incorporated in master plans of Delhi. But as with other things, this too was largely ignored by both corporations and consumers," the official remarked.

Under the previous regulation regime, the penalty of 1.5 times the water bill amount was being imposed for properties built on plots of 500sq m and above, which did not have functional RWH systems. At the same time, houses on 100sq m plots that had RWH systems were getting a 10% rebate on their bills.

"In case of non-compliance of the new norms after the two deadlines, we have also kept a strong punitive action of water supply disconnection," an official said. Regulations have also been amended for plots with area of 500sq m and above. "No new water connection and sewer connection will be sanctioned to plots having area of 500sqm and above without installation of a functional RWH system," the regulations state.

Delhi receives 617-670mm of average annual rainfall which can be used to recharge the depleting ground water resources. However, most of it goes waste every monsoon season. To facilitate and popularise the idea of rainwater harvesting systems, DJB had opened three "rain centres" but the city's response has been dismal. Data from DJB shows that while 1,550 consumers had availed the rebate for installing RWH, a whopping 11,958 consumers (in 500sq m and above category) were penalised for defaulting. "A penalty amount of Rs 56.71 crore has been imposed since July 1, 2017," an official said.

DJB has also made water recycling mandatory for bulk users. "New water/sewer connections to newly constructed properties having a sewage discharge of over 10,000 litres a day will be sanctioned only if they have installed a functional waste water recycling system," rules stated. Official explained that the daily outfall will be determined for hotels, institutions and such big users on the basis of capacity and footfall. "On an average, we have used the 80% formula. If people are consuming 100 litres of waters, around 80 litres of waste water is generated," he added.
