WHAT CAN GO WRONG AND WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENT EFFECTS ?

- **Open storage tanks** can lead to suspended solids contamination, bacteriological pollution and contamination of the water with mosquito larvae.
- **Dirty roofs** may lead to contamination with not only dust and suspended solids, but to contamination from old paint, rust from iron roofs etc.
- Leaks from **septic tanks or pit latrines** can pose a risk of bacteriological contamination.
- **Air pollution** may cause the rainwater to contain pollutants.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- **Physical inspection** of the open tanks will reveal the presence of suspended solids or mosquito larvae.
- You will know that the roof is contaminating the rainwater when you **taste or smell** the water.
- When **diarrhoea** occurs, you can suspect bacteriological contamination.
- When you doubt the safety of the water, a **health officer** can **monitor or classify** the water to determine its fitness of use (see fact sheet on Water Classification).
- When rainwater causes **rust problems**, it can indicate atmospheric pollution.

WHAT TO DO?

- **Seal open storage tanks** and clean storage tanks regularly if possible.
- In the case of runoff from roofs bringing dirt with the first rainstorm, **bypass the first rainwater from the roofs**. This should also be practiced where atmospheric pollution is a problem
- In the case of bacteriological contamination, the water may be **boiled or disinfected with bleach.**
- In the case of other pollutants, the water may not be fit for its analysed use and it may be advisable to **use another and safer water source.**
- If water is in the **purple class** (see fact sheet on water classification), it should not be used for drinking, but only for flushing the toilet, etc.

REFERENCES: DWAF (2002). Quality of domestic water supplies. Volume 5: Management Guide. WRC No. TT 162/01, pp. 34 and 35