

The District's Stormwater Fee

The District of Columbia Department of the Environment (DDOE) is responsible for managing stormwater pollution in the District and currently charges commercial and residential property owners a stormwater fee based on the amount of impervious surface of each property. In 2010, DDOE changed its stormwater fee structure for single family residences to make the fee more equitable.

- [Notice of Final Stormwater Fee Rulemaking \[PDF\]](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is the stormwater fee?

The stormwater fee covers the cost to manage and treat pollution in stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff occurs when rain and melted snow do not soak into the ground.

Why is stormwater a problem?

Stormwater enters storm drains from streets, buildings, parking lots, and driveways. Along the way, the stormwater runoff picks up trash and pollutants. Storm drains carry pollution to waterways such as Rock Creek, the Anacostia River, and the Potomac River.

Why charge a stormwater fee?

The federal government requires that the District controls pollution from stormwater runoff. The stormwater fee provides a dedicated funding source to pay for these pollution control efforts. This fee helps to pay for green roofs, rain gardens, tree planting, street sweeping, and other activities that help keep waterways clean.

How is the stormwater fee calculated? The stormwater fee is based on the concept of an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), which is based on the average amount (1,000 square feet) of impervious surface on residential properties. Formerly, all single family residences were charged based on one ERU.

Single family residences are assessed a number of ERUs based on the amount of impervious surface. The following is the tiered rate structure:

Square Feet of Impervious Surface	Number of ERUs
100 to 600	0.6
700 to 2,000	1.0
2,100 to 3,000	2.4
3,100 to 7,000	3.8
7,100 to 11,000	8.6
11,000 and above	13.5

Each ERU is charged \$2.67 per month.

For all other properties, such as businesses and large multi-family properties, the stormwater fee is charged at a rate of \$2.67 per month for each 1,000 square feet of impervious area on their lot, reduced to the nearest 100 square feet.

For example, the monthly stormwater fee for a commercial property with 26,500 square feet of impervious area is calculated as follows:

$$26,500 \text{ square feet} / 1,000 \text{ square feet} = 26.5 \times \$2.67 = \$70.76 \text{ per month}$$

Will the Stormwater Fee go up in the future?

The stormwater pollution control requirements the District must meet are specified in a permit issued by EPA. DDOE continually reevaluates the projected implementation costs of these stormwater requirements in order to determine if available stormwater fee revenue is adequate. Should DDOE determine that the stormwater fee revenue will not meet the projected implementation costs of the stormwater permit, the Department will begin a ratemaking process involving public notice and hearings to increase the stormwater fee to collect more revenue.

How does this relate to DC Water's Impervious Area Charge?

Both fees relate to improving the District's water quality. However, DDOE's stormwater fee and the DC Water charge address separate pollution control requirements. See the [DC Water's Impervious Area Charge](#) for more information.

Is there a way I can reduce my stormwater fee?

Yes! DDOE is currently developing a stormwater fee discount program called RiverSmart Rewards. The program will provide water and sewer ratepayers the opportunity to receive up to a

55% discount off the stormwater fee to property owners who implement measures to manage and reduce stormwater runoff. In order to receive a discount, the ratepayer must submit a complete application to DDOE and be current in all payments of the stormwater fee to DC Water.

DDOE will begin accepting applications as soon as the stormwater fee discount program proposed rulemaking is finalized, likely in the summer of 2012. Once live, ratepayers will be able to apply for retroactive discounts to no earlier than the implementation date of the impervious area stormwater fee (i.e. May 1, 2009). DDOE is coordinating with DC Water to develop and implement this program and will provide more details when available. Please note that DDOE will be phasing implementation of the program. Please contact Emily Rice at emily.rice@dc.gov or 202-535-2679 for more information on RiverSmart Rewards.

Are there measures in place to assist low-income residents with water bills?

Low-income residents may qualify for assistance with their water bill through DC Waters S.P.L.A.S.H. program administered by the Greater Washington Urban League and the Customer Assistance Program administered by the DDOE Energy Office. For more information about S.P.L.A.S.H., contact the Greater Washington Urban League at (202) 265-8200. For more information about the Customer Assistance Program, contact the DDOE Energy Office at (202) 673-6700 or visit [DC Water](#). Regarding stormwater fees, DDOE is currently developing a storm water fee discount program to assist all District residents and property owners.