

Changes to 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. DDOE is changing its stormwater fee structure for single family residences to make the fee more equitable.

Public notices of final rulemaking on the stormwater fee:

- [Final Stormwater Fee Rulemaking](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. 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.

2. Why is stormwater a problem?

Stormwater enters storm drains from streets, buildings, parking lots and driveways, picking up trash and pollutants. These drains carry pollution to waterways such as Rock Creek, the Anacostia River, and the Potomac River.

3. 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.

4. How is the stormwater fee changing?

In May of 2009, regulations for the stormwater fee were updated to reflect the amount of impervious or hard surface, area found on properties. Impervious areas create more stormwater runoff and consequently, increase the cost to manage the pollution. Single family residences were formerly charged for 1000 square feet of impervious area. The most recent changes group single family residences into "tiers" based on property size. As a result, stormwater fees will be more closely tied to the amount of stormwater runoff created by a property. Most single family properties will either see a reduction or a slight increase in their monthly stormwater fee. Larger than average single family properties, however, will see an increase in their fees.

5. Why is the stormwater fee changing?

The old fee for single family residential properties didn't draw any distinction between small properties that create small amounts of stormwater runoff and larger properties that create a lot of runoff. By grouping single family residences into "tiers" based on property size, the District's stormwater management costs can be more fairly distributed among single family properties.

6. What will happen to my bill?

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.

The final rule charges single family residences based on a number of ERUs that corresponds to their amount of impervious area, as follows:

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
11,100 and above	13.5

Each ERU will be charged \$2.67 per month.

For all other properties, such as businesses and large multi-family properties, the stormwater fee will be charged \$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 would be calculated as follows:

26,500 square feet / 1,000 square feet = 26.5 X \$2.67 = \$70.76 per month

7. How is this change in stormwater fees being put into place?

The Council of the District of Columbia granted DDOE authority to revise stormwater fees in June 2008. A more recent piece of legislation directed DDOE to base the stormwater fee on impervious area, which was completed in May of 2009. The current fee proposal is intended to make the fee system more equitable for single family properties and to maintain a consistent billing methodology with DC Water. DDOE issued a proposed regulation in the DC Register on September 24, 2010. Feedback received Public comments will be accepted for 30 days and a public hearing will be held on October 25, 2010. After reviewing public feedback, DDOE will develop and publish a final regulation.

8. 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. For more information on DC Water's Impervious Area Charge, [click here](#).

9. Is there a way I can reduce my stormwater fee?

The District Council has directed DDOE to establish a stormwater fee discount program that offers incentives to property owners who implement measures to manage and reduce stormwater runoff. The Council also indicated that stormwater fee discounts shall be made retroactive to no earlier than the implementation date of the impervious area stormwater fee (i.e. May 1, 2009). This program is currently under development and DDOE intends to publish details of the discount program for public comment soon. DDOE is coordinating with DC Water to develop and implement this program and will provide more details when available.

10. 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 the [DC WASA](#) and [DDOE](#) websites. Regarding stormwater fees, DDOE is currently developing a storm water fee discount program to assist all District residents and property owners,