

Stormwater Frequently Asked Questions

Stormwater Utilities

1. **Why do we need to manage stormwater?**

Stormwater runoff is water that flows over our yards, streets, sidewalks, buildings, parking lots and other surfaces due to rainfall, snowmelt or irrigation. Stormwater runoff flows into storm sewers and eventually ends up in our local streams, ponds, lakes and rivers. Stormwater management is essential to maintain the quality of water entering the local water bodies, mitigate flooding and prevent property damage and comply with the federal Clean Water Act regulations.

2. **Why do we have a stormwater utility charge?**

The Stormwater utility charge (stormwater charge) is used to operate and maintain the City's storm sewer system, mitigate flooding, and to implement practices to protect the water quality of receiving waterbodies from the impact of urbanization. The City also must comply with the regulatory requirements of the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit under the Clean Water Act.

3. **What is the basis of my stormwater charge?**

The stormwater charge is based on the impervious area square footage that is calculated for your parcel.

4. **Is my stormwater charge based on my water consumption?**

The stormwater charge is NOT based on your monthly Water Consumption. The stormwater charge is based on the **Impervious Area** calculated for your parcel.

5. **How is the impervious area calculated for my property?**

Your property's Impervious Area is calculated as the total area (square feet) of any hard surface area, including buildings, any attached or detached structures, and paved or hardscaped areas, that either prevents or restricts stormwater, snowmelt, or irrigation from entering into the soil, and thereby causes water to run off the surface. Currently, the City measures impervious area for properties using one of these two approaches:

- **Actual Impervious Area Measurement:** For many of the properties in the City, the impervious area square footage of each property is determined based on actual measurements of impervious surface areas using building plans, aerial imagery, and Geographical Information System (GIS) tools.

- **Estimated Impervious Area Using Runoff Coefficient:** For some parcels, the impervious area square footage is estimated by multiplying the property’s lot size square footage by a runoff coefficient factor that corresponds with the current land use of the property.

6. **How is the Stormwater rate defined?**

The monthly stormwater rate is defined as a monthly rate per Equivalent Stormwater Unit (i.e., \$/ESU). Currently, one ESU equates to 1,530 square feet of impervious area. The City’s Fiscal Year 2023 monthly ESU rate is \$14.45/ESU. The ESU and ESU rate are established by ordinance or resolution of the City Council and may be amended from time to time by the City Council.

7. **How is the Stormwater Charge calculated?**

The monthly stormwater charge is determined as follows, depending on whether the property is a Single Family Residential Developed property or not.

- a. **Single Family Residential Developed Property:** If the property belongs to the Single-Family Residential Property class, then the monthly charge is determined as follows:

- The parcel’s impervious area (in square feet) is determined using one of the two approaches described in Question 5.
- The property is then designated an impervious area tier of Low, Medium, or High, based on the impervious area that is determined for that property.
- The ESUs are then designated based on the impervious area tier.
- Table 1 presents the impervious area tiers, the corresponding range, and the ESUs for each tier.

Table 1: Residential ESUs

Class	Impervious Area (Square Feet)	ESU
Low	<1,485	0.75 ESU
Medium	1,485 to 1,578	1.00 ESU
High	>1,578	1.25 ESU

- b. **All Other Properties:** For all other properties in the City, the monthly stormwater charge is determined as follows:

- First, the parcel’s impervious area (in square feet) is determined using one of the two approaches described in Question 5.
- Second, the ESU is calculated by dividing the parcel’s impervious area by 1,530 square feet
- Third, the Stormwater Charge is calculated by multiplying the ESU by the monthly ESU Rate of \$14.45/ESU.

Example (Single Family Residential):

- The Impervious Area of a single-family residential property is 2,000 Square Feet
- The designated tier for this property based on impervious area is “High” and therefore the designated ESU = **1.25 ESUs**
- The calculated monthly stormwater charge is **1.25 X \$14.45 = \$18.06**

Example (Commercial):

Using an example of a Retail Store:

- The Impervious Area of the store’s parcel is 3,500 Square Feet
- The calculated ESU is **3,500 ÷ 1,530 = 2.29 ESUs**
- The calculated monthly stormwater charge is **2.29 X \$14.45 = \$33.09**

8. My property is tax exempt. Do I still have to pay the stormwater charge?

Yes. The stormwater charge is a “User Fee” similar to your water, sewer, and electric charges. The stormwater charge is not a tax. Therefore, all tax-exempt parcels that are within the City limits have to pay the stormwater charge.

9. If my stormwater runoff does not flow into the City’s stormwater infrastructure, am I still charged the stormwater?

Yes. The City is responsible for the stormwater management of its MS4 system and for maintaining water quality in the surface waters under its NPDES permit. The City’s stormwater management program benefits everyone in the City by protecting the City streets and properties from flooding, erosion, pollution problems, property damage, and protects the City and its local surface waters. It also enables the City to comply with federal and state regulatory requirements. Therefore, all parcels in the City are required to pay a stormwater charge.

10. What can I do to reduce my stormwater charge?

You can reduce your stormwater charge by reducing the amount of impervious surface on your property or by applying for the stormwater credits. Your property may be eligible for a stormwater credit if some or all of the stormwater runoff from your property is managed on-site and you can provide supporting documentation consistent with the City’s requirements for a property area meeting the standard. See questions 11 through 18 for further information on stormwater credits.

Stormwater Credits

11. Is there a credit for rain barrels?

No. Rain barrels are not considered sufficient stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs).

12. Can I get credit for installing a BMP (rain garden, etc.) in the Right-Of-Way/boulevard?

No. Structural BMPs, such as rain gardens, and non-structural BMPs, such as Smart Salting, must be installed or practiced on their property and treat runoff from their property in order to receive a credit.

13. Can I get credit for treating runoff from other properties with my BMP?

No. Credit cannot be given for treating impervious area on parcels that you do not own.

14. If I lost a credit but am now compliant, can I get my credit back?

If you once were receiving a credit and that credit was removed, you must ensure that any BMP(s) with which you wish to apply for a credit are functioning properly, that you are compliant with Chapter 54 (if applicable), and that you are current on your utility bills.

Once you have met these eligibility requirements, you are able to apply for a credit under current program rules. Depending on when you originally had your credit, and the BMPs and/or area that you are now treating, your credit award amount may differ from the original credit amount.

All credits applied for after January 1, 2022, will be awarded under the new program requirements, in compliance of the ordinance. If you previously received credits under the program prior to January 1, 2022 and lost credits, you will now fall within the new program requirements.

15. Can I get my credit awarded retroactively to the date I lost the credit?

No. Credit will not be awarded before the date of the most current, complete application submittal, including all necessary documents and materials. Any stormwater utility fees charged during the time a credit was not on the account will not be forgiven or reimbursed.

Note that you must be current on your utility bill(s) to apply for a credit.

16. How does the recertification process work?

Recertification is required every 5 years for commercial credits. Residential Credits are exempt from recertification.

The City will send notification to properties that are due for recertification in the year the recertification is due. For more information on the recertification process, please see the recertification section of the Commercial Applicant Guide.

17. Do credits transfer with ownership change?

No, credits do not transfer upon ownership change. However, you are able to apply for credit under current Program rules as long as you meet the requirements and supply all the necessary information and documents in your application submittal. For more information on commercial credit eligibility and application requirements, please see the Commercial Applicant Guide. For more information on residential credit eligibility and application requirements, please see the webpage: <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/resident-services/utility-services/stormwater/residential-stormwater-credits/>

18. What does it mean that a credit will apply to “property area meeting the standard”?

“Property area meeting the standard” means that only those impervious areas on the property where the runoff is being treated in the way that meets the credit type will be eligible for a credit.

For example, if you treat 50% of your impervious area for an ‘Above and Beyond’ volume reduction credit of 20%, you will be eligible for a 20% credit on 50% of the impervious area on your property. If you treat 100% of the impervious area on your property for this credit type, you would be eligible for a 20% credit on 100% of the impervious area on your property. See the following page for an example.

Additional details on stormwater credits program are available on the City’s website.



Property Area Meeting Standard Example – On this property, the map on the left highlights all of the impervious area in light blue. On the right, the map shows an infiltration basin best stormwater best management practice (BMP) in orange, and the impervious area that drains to that BMP in blue. Only the blue area on the right would be considered as ‘meeting the standard’, so any credit percentage would be applied to that area only.