



Storm Water Management Charge Questions & Answers

What is the Storm Water Management Charge?

The Storm Water Management Charge is a tool for communities to invest in reducing pollution from storm water runoff. Storm water is water from rain and melting snow that flows off roofs, driveways, parking lots, playgrounds, streets, and other hard, or impervious, surfaces. The water washes industrial chemicals, gas, oil, antifreeze, road salt, detergents, pesticides, pet waste, and other pollutants into storm drains. The storm drains dump the polluted water, without treating it, directly into Lake Michigan and local rivers. Storm water is the largest polluter of streams, rivers, and lakes. Storm Water Management Charge monies pay for projects to prevent storm water pollution of natural waterways and to operate and maintain storm sewers.

The Storm Water Management Charge is based on the amount of impervious surface area of each property. A typical residential property has an average impervious surface area of 1,610 square feet. This measurement is called an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU).

The Storm Water Management Charge distributes the cost of storm water programs to non-profit and tax-exempt organizations, and non-residential and commercial property owners with multiple buildings, parking lots, and paved surfaces.

Previously, the costs for all city sewers, including storm and sanitary sewers, were covered by sewer charges based on drinking water usage. The Storm Water Management Charge was introduced in the 2006 City of Milwaukee budget. The charge appears on the Milwaukee Municipal Services Bill administered by the Milwaukee Water Works.

What is an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)?

A typical residential property has an average impervious surface area of 1,610 square feet. An Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) is equal to 1,610 square feet. The number of ERUs for each non-residential and commercial developed property and vacant improved property was calculated by dividing the impervious surface area of the property by 1,610. The Storm Water Management Charge is \$8.00 per ERU per quarter for non-residential and commercial developed property and vacant improved property.

How is the charge calculated?

The charge is based on the amount of impervious surface area of each property.

Residential properties with one to four units are charged a flat rate of \$8.00 per quarter.

Non-residential and commercial developed property and vacant improved property is charged based on the amount of impervious surface area of the property. The charge is \$8.00 per ERU per quarter. The number of ERUs for each property is calculated by dividing the square footage of impervious surface of the property by 1,610.

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Questions & Answers *Continued*

My residential property has more than four dwelling units. What is the charge?

Residential properties with more than four units are considered commercial developed property when calculating the charge.

How are condominium complexes charged?

Condominium associations are charged based on the amount of impervious surface area of the entire property. The number of ERUs for the property is calculated by dividing the impervious surface area of the property by 1,610. The Storm Water Management Charge is \$8.00 per ERU per quarter. The charge is billed quarterly to the condominium association.

What is an “improved” property?

An improved property is a parcel of land that has a building on it and/or any impervious surface, such as a paved parking area, sidewalks, etc.

Where does the Storm Water Management Charge appear?

The charge appears on the Municipal Services Bill as a separate line item. The billing unit, ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit) is shown on that line along with the total charge (currently the number of ERUs times \$8.00 per quarter). The city does not bill fractions of an ERU.

Why is the charge on my “water bill”?

The Municipal Services Bill includes charges for drinking water, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) sewage treatment, and certain municipal services provided in the City of Milwaukee. It is cost-effective to include all charges on one bill rather than issue multiple bills. The Milwaukee Water Works manages the billing and forwards the collected charges to the city treasurer for distribution to city departments and the MMSD.

I never received a “Municipal Services Bill” before. Why am I receiving one now?

The City of Milwaukee now has the capability to charge properties that receive city services but no water or sewer service. Previously, only those receiving water and sewer service paid local sewerage charges and snow and ice control charges. New accounts were established for those properties that formerly were exempt from city service charges.

How do I appeal the Storm Water Management Charge if I believe it was incorrectly determined or charged to my property?

City ordinance established a flat fee for residential properties so there is no appeal process for residential properties. Appeals are available only for non-residential and commercial developed property and vacant improved property.

To appeal a Storm Water Management charge, telephone the Milwaukee Water Works Customer Service Center, (414) 286-2830, and leave your name, property address, telephone number, and if available, an email address. The Water Works will forward your appeal to the Department of Public Works for investigation.

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Questions & Answers *Continued*

If I am a tenant of the property, can I be held responsible for payment of the Storm Water Management Charge?

Your payment responsibility is determined by the terms of your lease, which is a private agreement between you and your landlord. The city is not a party to the lease, and will not become involved in a disagreement between landlord and tenant. The landlord or property owner is responsible for payment of the charge if the tenant fails to pay under terms of the lease.

What happens to unpaid Storm Water Management Charges?

If charges for this service remain unpaid for a period of time (two or more billing quarters), the charges will be transferred to the property tax account in September and are a lien against the property.

Do tax-exempt properties, such as churches, non-profit organizations, and government-owned properties pay the Storm Water Management Charge?

All properties are charged for use of the city storm sewers, including properties that are otherwise exempt from paying property taxes.

I'm selling my house. How do I transfer responsibility for the Storm Water Management Charge and other charges to the new owner?

The Storm Water Management Charges billed to a property sold after July 1, 2006 are the responsibility of the new owner and are handled in the same manner as all current charges (drinking water, sewer, solid waste, snow and ice charge). If a property is sold mid-quarter, for example, the total bill is prorated according to the time of sale so seller and buyer split the cost.

Para una explicación en Español por favor llame (414) 286-2830.