



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) Stormwater Charge

CONDOMINIUMS

1. What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is water that flows over our yards, streets, buildings, parking lots, swimming pools and other surfaces when it rains. Stormwater runoff flows into the nearest waters and eventually ends up in our local streams, ponds, rivers, and oceans.

2. Why do we have a stormwater charge?

The City has a combined sewer system (CSS) that conveys most of the City's stormwater runoff and all of the sanitary sewage to the City's wastewater treatment plants for treatment and disposal. In addition, a very small portion of the City's jurisdiction is also served by Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) drainage system. During intense precipitation events, excessive rainfall can overwhelm the CSS leading to combined sewer overflows impacting your health and environment. Intense wet weather events can also lead to localized flooding in MS4 areas. The City's sewer charges, and the stormwater charges help fund the repair and maintenance of the combined sewer system, the MS4 system, and other stormwater structures that convey stormwater runoff, prevent sewer overflows, localized flooding, pooling, etc.

3. If my stormwater runoff does not flow into the streets and flows directly into a river, should I still pay the stormwater charge?

Yes. The City is responsible for the holistic stormwater management of the City's stormwater system which includes the CSS, the MS4, and all the surface water including the Delaware River. Therefore, the City is responsible for managing the water quality of not only the treated wastewater that is discharged from the City's wastewater treatment facility but also the overall water quality in the Delaware River and other surface waters that are within the City's jurisdictional limits, which includes stormwater that is directly discharged by properties into the surface waters.

The City's stormwater management benefits everyone in the City by protecting the City streets and properties from flooding, erosion, pollution problems, and property damage. Therefore, all properties within the City's jurisdictional limits are billed a monthly stormwater charge. However, the City offers a stormwater credits program, specifically to non-residential properties. Properties that demonstrate onsite management of stormwater or properties that have a direct discharge NPDES permit may be eligible for some stormwater credits, subject to meeting the eligibility requirements.

4. Is my Stormwater Charge based on my water consumption?

Stormwater Charge is NOT based on your monthly Water Consumption. Stormwater Charge is based on the *Impervious Area* estimated for a parcel.

5. What is a Parcel?

"Parcel" means any real property, either developed or undisturbed, which is assigned a tax parcel number by New Castle County.

6. What is the basis of my stormwater charge?

Stormwater charge is determined based on the impervious area square footage determined for your property.



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7. What is an Impervious Area?

Impervious Area" is the total square feet of any hard surface area, including buildings, any attached or detached structures, paved or hard-scaped areas, compacted dirt or gravel and other such surfaces that either prevent or restrict the volume of stormwater that can enter the soil, and thereby causes water to run off the surface.

8. How is the impervious area calculated for my property?

Impervious Area for a condominium parcel is determined using a two-step process:

- (i) First, a parcel is assigned to the Condominium stormwater class that the City has defined.
- (ii) If a parcel belongs to the Condominium class, then the impervious area is estimated for the entire Condominium Complex. The impervious area of the condominium complex is computed as follows:
 - The actual footprint of the buildings + the estimated area of paved surface and structures around the building

Example:

- If a Condominium Complex has a total building footprint of 4,500 Sq. Ft., then
 - The impervious area surrounding the condo building is first estimated (using GIS) = **800 Sq. Ft.**
 - For the Condominium Parcel, then the total estimated **Impervious Area = 4,500 + 800 = 5,300 Sq. Ft.**

9. How is the Stormwater Rate defined?

The monthly stormwater rate is defined as a charge per "Equivalent Stormwater Unit (ESU)". The **ESU** is a base unit of measure that has been defined for the calculation of stormwater billing units. For the City of Wilmington, one ESU is equivalent to **789 Sq. Ft.** of impervious area, and the FY 2025 monthly stormwater rate for one ESU is **\$5.565**. The stormwater rate per ESU, that is currently effective, is per the City's Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Rate Ordinance 24-017.

10. How is the Stormwater Charge calculated for a parcel?

For a parcel that is assigned to the Condominium stormwater class, the stormwater charge is calculated as follows:

- (i) First, the ESU Factor is calculated by dividing the parcel's estimated impervious area square footage by 789.
- (ii) Second, the Stormwater Charge is calculated by multiplying the ESU Factor by the Monthly ESU Rate of \$5.565/ESU.

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- The calculated "ESU Factor" is $5,300 \div 789 = 6.72$ ESUs
- The calculated monthly stormwater charge is $6.72 \times \$5.565 = \37.40

11. How is the Stormwater Charge calculated for an individual Condominium Unit?

The City **does not** calculate the stormwater charge for the individual condominium unit, as the monthly stormwater charge is only calculated for the entire Condominium Parcel. The City computes the monthly stormwater charge for the entire Condominium Parcel and sends the bill to the Condo Association. It is up to the Condo Association to apportion the monthly stormwater charge among the individual Condo units.

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

Yes. Stormwater charge is a "User Fee", like the water and sewer user charges, and is not a tax. Therefore, all tax exempt properties that are within the City's jurisdiction must pay the monthly stormwater charge.