



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) Stormwater Charge

RESIDENTIAL

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 of a Parcel estimated?

Impervious Area is determined using a two-step process:

- (i) First, a parcel is assigned to the Single Family Residential (SWR) or Multi-family Residential (SWM) stormwater class that the City has defined.
- (ii) Second, for parcels that belong to the SFR or MFR stormwater class, the parcel’s total impervious area is computed based on the following:
 - Impervious Area = Actual footprint of the building + plus any attached structure area + any detached structure area in the parcel.
 - The total impervious area that is computed, then determines which of the four “Impervious Area Tiers” the parcel falls into, as presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Residential Tiers

Impervious Area Tiers	Stormwater Class	Impervious Area (Square Feet)
Tier 1	SWR1/SWM1	0 to 799
Tier 2	SWR2/SWM2	800 to 1,299
Tier 3	SWR3/SWM3	1,300 to 2,399
Tier 4	SWR4/SWM4	2,400 and over

Example:

- If a Single Family Residential (SWR) or a Multi-family Residential (SWM) parcel has a building with an actual footprint of 1,500 Sq. Ft., an attached garage of 200 Sq. Ft., and a detached structure of 100 Sq. Ft, then
 - The estimated Impervious Area = $1,500 + 200 + 100 = 1,800$ Sq. Ft.
 - The parcel is then assigned to the impervious area tier **SWR 3** (1,300 to 2,399 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



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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 a SWR or a SWM class, the Monthly Stormwater Charge is determined based on the "Impervious Area Tier". The City has assigned an **ESU Ratio** and a **Monthly Stormwater Charge** for each impervious area tier, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Residential Stormwater Charge

S. No.	Tier	Stormwater Class	ESU Ratio	Monthly Stormwater Charge
1	Tier 1	SWR1/SWM1	1.00	\$5.57
2	Tier 2	SWR2/SWM2	1.45	\$8.07
3	Tier 3	SWR3/SWM3	2.48	\$13.80
4	Tier 4	SWR4/SWM4	4.40	\$24.49

Example:

- If a Single Family Residential (SWR) or a Multi-family Residential (SWM) parcel has a building with an actual footprint of 1,500 Sq. Ft., an attached garage of 200 Sq. Ft., and a detached structure of 100 Sq. Ft, then
 - The estimated Impervious Area = **1,500 + 200 + 100 = 1,800 Sq. Ft.**
 - The parcel is then assigned to the impervious area tier **SWR 3** (1,300 to 2,399 Sq. Ft.)
 - The assigned ESU Ratio for tier SWR 3 is **2.48**
 - The Monthly Stormwater Charge for tier SWR 3 is **\$13.80**

11. When is a parcel designated with a Multi-Family Residential (SWM) stormwater class?

If a residential parcel has greater than one dwelling unit but less than or equal to three (3) dwelling units, then that parcel is designated as a Multi-Family Residential (SWM) stormwater class. Any residential parcel that has more than three (3) dwelling units is designated as Multi-Family Apartment (MFA) stormwater class, which belongs to the Non-residential parcel category.

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.