



STORMWATER UTILITY RATES: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE UTILITY RATES?

Utility rates support the continued efforts to increase the capacity and reliability of the City's water resources, sanitation and stormwater operations, maintenance and infrastructure. Revenues from rates are directly tied to the costs of the specific utility they support. Revenues from Stormwater rates only support the cost of Stormwater functions, Water Resources rates only support Water Resources functions, and Sanitation rates only support Sanitation functions. Utility rates are evaluated on an annual basis with any required adjustments to rates typically going into effect on October 1.

WHY DO I PAY FOR STORMWATER SERVICE?

Stormwater fees support the Clean Water Act of 1972. Fees are directly related to stormwater functions and assist with planning, operations and maintenance of stormwater systems. These functions also help control flooding, enhance water quality and minimize the environmental impact of stormwater pollution.

WHAT IS AN IMPERVIOUS SURFACE?

An impervious surface is any surface that does not allow water to seep into the ground. For example, roofing and driveways.

WHAT'S HAPPENED WITH MY STORMWATER RATE?

Effective October 1, 2019 the City of St. Petersburg implemented a tiered billing structure for stormwater rates for single-family properties to replace the flat fee that was previously charged to all single-family residential properties. This new tiered structure has classified single-family properties into tiers, based on the square footage of impervious surface area (surfaces that water runs off), so that a property's fee more accurately reflects its impact to the stormwater system.

Each single-family residential property has been assigned to the appropriate tier based on analysis of infrared aerial photography that distinguishes hard, impervious surfaces (like roofing and driveways) from areas that can absorb stormwater (like lawns and gardens). This analysis of impervious area was conducted for all properties in the city, including non-single-family residential properties, and was a one-time evaluation. However, properties will be reevaluated with any permit issued that would impact the impervious surface area of a property.

You can find current stormwater tier rates and how to calculate your rate at stpete.org/rates.



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WHY WAS THE RATE STRUCTURE CHANGED?

The prior rate structure treated single-family residential properties differently from all other properties. Previously, all single-family residential properties were billed the same amount – no matter how much (or how little) demand they placed on the stormwater drainage system. All other properties were billed based on their stormwater contribution. The overall goal of updating the stormwater billing structure was to charge all properties in the same, objective way. The new structure allows a property's fee to more accurately reflect its impact to our stormwater system. Using impervious surface area is a widely accepted and recommended method of calculating fees.

HOW CAN I REVIEW MY IMPERVIOUS AREA AND STORMWATER RATE?

Your stormwater rate tier can be found through the **Stormwater Review and Appeals Portal** at stpete.org/rates. You will be able to view your impervious surface area measurement and submit an appeal for remeasurement if desired. Directions are available to you within the portal on how to search for your property. The City hosted public meetings to walk through the portal and appeals process.

WILL THIS IMPACT CONDO OWNERS?

Impact to condo owners depends on the way utility billing is setup with the homeowner or condo association. If a community uses a master meter and includes utility fees in association fees, the change to the amount of association fees charged to condo owners is at the discretion of the association. If a condo owner has an individual meter and pays utilities directly to the City, the change in monthly payment is directly tied to the impervious area and rate change.

WHAT ABOUT COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES?

Non-single-family residential properties (i.e. commercial properties) will continue to be charged a fee based on the number of Single-Family Residential Units (SFRU's) their impervious area represents. One SFRU is equal to the impervious surface area of a typical single-family residential property in the City, which has been preliminarily determined to be 2,406 square feet of impervious surface area.

The number of SFRU's that a commercial property represents will be multiplied by the stormwater rate per SFRU. Find an example of SFRU calculation at stpete.org/rates.

HOW CAN I SAVE MONEY ON MY UTILITY BILL?

WATER CONSERVATION REBATES AND PROGRAMS

The best way to minimize your utility bill is to use less water. St. Petersburg's Water Conservation Program offers tips, rebate programs and resources at stpete.org/waterconservation.



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STORMWATER MANAGEMENT UTILITY FEE CREDITS

The City of St. Petersburg offers two stormwater fee credits (reduction in stormwater fee) to utility customers that minimize stormwater runoff or improve the quality of stormwater runoff through approved practices. Since the stormwater impervious surface area measurements have been updated as part of the stormwater rate study, existing credits will no longer be in effect. Properties that have previously taken advantage of stormwater credits will need to reapply for consideration.

Who May Apply?

Non-single-family residential utility customers may apply. Single-family residential utility customers that are part of a larger common development or subdivision that has a privately-maintained stormwater facility permitted by Southwest Florida Water Management District may collectively apply. Eligible applicants include:

- Commercial business properties
- Multi-family unit properties
- Industrial properties
- Government properties
- Condominiums/townhomes/traditional single-family home properties that all function off one metering system. *Contact your homeowner or neighborhood association representative to collectively apply. Applications will not be accepted from an individual single-family property that is metered separately.*

Two credit programs are offered:

- **Stormwater Management System Credit:** Properties that operate and maintain onsite detention or retention stormwater management systems can receive a credit for reducing stormwater runoff impacts from the property to the City system.
- **Tidal Water Discharge Credit:** Properties that discharge directly into tidal waters to Boca Ciega Bay or Tampa Bay can receive a credit based on the area of the parcel discharging directly into eligible tidal waters treated to Outstanding Florida Waters criteria. Discharge to tidal waters cannot pass into or through City-maintained drainage systems.

More information and applications can be found at stpete.org/rates.

UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Utility Assistance Program empowers St. Pete utility customers to make donations to help other utility customers experiencing financial hardships with their utility costs. Donations are made through the donor's utility bill and are distributed through a network of social service agencies. Assistance is limited and is administered by third-party agencies according to their respective eligibility criteria. Learn more at stpete.org/utilityassistance.

HOW CAN I GET IN TOUCH?

Contact the Stormwater Tier Rate Program at stormwater.appeals@stpete.org or call 727-893-7280.