

CITY OF LOUISVILLE STORMWATER PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Q. What is stormwater and why is it a problem?

A. Stormwater is water from rain and snowmelt. Rooftops and paved areas not only prevent the water from being absorbed naturally but help it run off at a much faster rate. This runoff water contains pollutants that if unmanaged can affect the ecosystems and aquatic life in our streams and lakes.

Q. What is the purpose of the stormwater utility?

A. The stormwater utility was established to provide revenue to maintain and improve existing stormwater infrastructure in Louisville, to preserve, protect, and improve the water quality issue of stormwater runoff, and to develop a comprehensive stormwater management plan as mandated by the Federal government and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's, Stormwater Phase II Permit requirements and regulations.

Q. What are the utility fees based on?

A. The utility is based on the amount of impervious area of a property. Impervious surface area is a surface which impedes the natural infiltration of water, including, but not limited to roofs, driveways, patios, and/or private sidewalks. Impervious area shall be expressed in Equivalent Residential Units (EQU)'s. One EQU is equal to one household or an average of 3,500 square feet of impervious surface.

Q. Where does the money go that is collected from the stormwater utility fee?

A. Some of the important components of this stormwater utility include:

- 1.) Improve stormwater quality through monitoring and reduction of illicit discharges and pollutants.
- 2.) Public information and education concerning stormwater issues.
- 3.) Increased maintenance and repair of the city's stormwater sewer system.
- 4.) Development of stormwater design standards and regulations.
- 5.) Capital Improvement Projects to expand and rehabilitate existing stormwater conveyance systems.

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Q. Who has to pay the stormwater utility fee?

A. Everyone within the city that either uses or receives benefit from the maintenance of the stormwater system. All properties in the city that have impervious surfaces must pay these fees. The only exemptions will be publicly paved streets, roadways, and sidewalks, property owned or operated by the city, and undeveloped property that has no impervious surface.

Q. What is the charge for the stormwater utility?

A. Louisville residents will pay a monthly flat fee of \$2.00 per household, and commercial properties will be charged per square foot of impervious area divided by the EQU (3,500 square ft.) and then multiplied by \$2.00. Example: Business XYZ has 25,000 square feet impervious area. The 25,000 square feet is divided by the EQU and multiplied by the \$2.00 flat fee which equals \$20.00 monthly fee. $(25,000 \text{ sq. ft.} / 3,500 \text{ sq. ft.} \times \$2.00 = \$14.29)$

Q. Why is the city charging me for rain water?

A. You are not being charged for rain. The service charge is to manage programs to reduce or eliminate the pollution of stormwater, and to provide revenue to maintain and improve the existing stormwater infrastructure in Louisville. It has been demonstrated scientifically that runoff and pollution from property increase as the amount of impervious surface area on that property increase.

Q. Hasn't the city always had storm drains? Nothing has changed at my home/business. Why am I being charged now when I wasn't just a few years ago?

A. Yes, the city has had storm drains for a long time. However, the federal regulations that require a comprehensive stormwater quality management program are relatively new. These regulations have only been in effect for cities with a population of 10,000 or more people since 2002. The utility fee will enable the city to meet its responsibilities to manage the storm drain system, improve water quality, seek out and eliminate illicit runoff, educate citizens, and enforce pollution prevention measures and techniques.

Q. Am I still charged even if it doesn't rain for a long time?

A. Yes. The pollution potential is actually much greater when it has not rained in a long time because pollutants can build up on all impervious surfaces. In any storm event the initial runoff, or first flush, is the most contaminated. Contrary to what some people believe, stormwater charges are not based upon rainfall. Costs are incurred to reduce pollution, and to provide maintenance and improvements to the stormwater infrastructure. Rainwater is simply the carrier that transports the pollutants to open waterways.

Q. How was the rate for household utility fees developed?

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A. A statistical sampling was taken of representative properties in Louisville. Each was measured and an average impervious surface area was determined.

Q. I only have a driveway and no other stormwater leaves my property. Why am I being charged the fee?

A. Everyone benefits from the city's required Stormwater Management Plan, whether or not each of us has a storm sewer connected directly to our property. The runoff generated from is contributing to problems downstream. The approach being taken through this program recognizes that everyone contributes to the problem (runoff and pollution), and everyone will share in its benefits. (Improved water quality, reduce flooding, unimpaired access to roads, etc.).