

Surface Water Utility Fee Frequently Asked Questions 2023

What is a Surface Water Utility Fee?

The surface water utility fee is a service charge for surface water management services.

When was it approved?

The City of Marysville established a surface water utility in 1999. The utility fee was collected by Snohomish County on property tax statements. Starting in 2007, the City of Marysville began collecting the fee independently of Snohomish County. The fee is no longer on a customer's property tax statement, but is now included on their City of Marysville utility bill as a "surface water" fee.

What are the fees used for?

Surface water fees are primarily used to provide drainage and water quality services and fund the activities required by the federally mandated permit known as the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The NPDES permit requires municipalities to conduct environmental education and outreach, monitor for illicit discharges, control runoff from new development, complete system maintenance (such as catch basin cleaning and street sweeping) and perform water quality monitoring.

How is the fee determined?

The fee is based on the area of impervious surface coverage on a parcel. Single family residents pay a flat rate, while non-single family parcels are assessed a fee that is calculated using an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). An ERU is the average square feet of impervious surface on a single family parcel in the City. This number was calculated to be 3,200 square feet. The monthly fee is determined for a non-single family parcel by assessing the square footage of impervious surface and then dividing by an ERU, and multiplying by the monthly rate.

Here is an example of how the fee is determined:



Non-Single Family

Total Parcel Size: 139,744 ft² (red outline)

Total Impervious Surface: 24,153 ft² (red shaded area)

ERU: $24,153 / 3,200 = 7.5$

$7.5 \times \$25.86 = \193.95 (billed every other month)

What is an “impervious surface”?

Impervious surface is a hard surface area that prevents or reduces the entry of water into the soil. Common impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to, rooftops, walkways, patios, driveways, parking lots or storage areas, concrete or asphalt paving, gravel roads, packed earthen materials and oiled, macadam or other surfaces, which similarly impede the natural infiltration of storm water. Open, uncovered surface water management facilities are not considered as impervious surfaces.

How much is the fee?

As of January 1, 2023, all single family residences are charged a flat rate of \$25.86 bi-monthly, while non-single family parcels pay \$25.86 bi-monthly for each Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU = 3,200 square feet of impervious surface area, see the example above). Each year the fee may be increased by 2%.

Is everyone required to pay the utility fee?

Yes, everyone pays the fee, but there are some reductions offered by the City. For more details on the following reductions, refer to Marysville Municipal Code Chapter 14.19.080.

- Senior citizen low-income and/or disabled low-income
- Public education institutions
- State highways
- Rainwater harvesting system

No surface water leaves my property, it all infiltrates. Do I still have to pay the fee?

Yes, all property owners must pay for City wide stormwater management because each piece of property contributes pollution to roadway stormwater systems, streams, or groundwater. The fees are based on the contribution of each property to the problem, not the potential benefit to the property. Properties with large amounts of pavement or buildings pay a higher fee because they contribute more runoff and typically generate more pollution. Sites with a lot of impervious area usually have parking lots which means they are generating trips on public roads. All City residents use public roads. Maintaining the storm system, and condition of the roads, is an essential part of the surface water program. Protecting water quality and preventing flooding benefits all ratepayers and those programs are administered Citywide.

I had to install a stormwater management facility on my property. Do I still have to pay the fee?

Yes, all property owners must pay for City wide stormwater management because each piece of property contributes pollution to roadway stormwater systems, streams, or groundwater. Stormwater facilities are required with most new development or redevelopment. New construction usually adds impervious area to the property. A stormwater facility is required to deal with the new runoff from that impervious area. The facility prevents the new runoff from flooding the neighboring property. The stormwater fee is used by the City to clean runoff from all public areas that are maintained by the City. Protecting water quality and preventing flooding benefits all ratepayers and those programs are administered City wide.