

CURRENTS

PWSA's new stormwater fee is a definitive step to improve stormwater management

Why Stormwater Matters

We are all familiar with the impacts of too much rain. Heavy rain can overwhelm our sewer system, cause basements to backup, and pollute our rivers and streams.

Our sewer system was not built to handle increasing amounts of rain due to climate change, and, with much of the city paved over, there is nowhere for the water to go. With new stormwater infrastructure under construction and a stormwater strategic plan underway, we are making continuous strides to improve stormwater management in Pittsburgh. However, we cannot continue this work without making certain that our rates reflect the need to pay for the construction of stormwater facilities.

Overview of New Stormwater Fee

In April, we introduced a new stormwater fee in our rate package submitted to the PA Public Utility Commission (PUC). With input from community members and stakeholders, we reached a tentative agreement on rates for 2022 and 2023. On November 18th, the PUC made a final determination to approve the stormwater fee and changes to existing water and wastewater rates. **The new stormwater fee and rates will go into effect on January 12, 2022 and will appear on or after that date on your PWSA bill.**

A stormwater fee for Pittsburgh is a notable change. Historically, we have funded our stormwater services from wastewater rates that are based on water usage. The new stormwater fee is based on the hard or impervious surfaces on a property. This ensures that all

equal to one equivalent residential unit (ERU) of impervious surface and is accepted as the industry standard unit of measure. If approved, the stormwater fee will be applied to all residential and non-residential properties in Pittsburgh in the following way:

Stormwater Monthly Fees (Based on Impervious Surface)	ERUs	2022	2023
Residential Tier 1 (≥ 400 to $<1,015$ sf)	.5	\$2.98	\$3.98
Residential Tier 2 ($\geq 1,015$ to $<2,710$ sf)	1	\$5.96	\$7.95
Residential Tier 3 ($\geq 2,710$ sf)	2	\$11.92	\$15.90
Non-Residential	Per ERU	\$5.96	\$7.95

70% of all Pittsburgh homeowners fall into Residential Tier 2.

property owners in Pittsburgh contribute a share that is proportional to the amount of runoff generated by their property. Establishing a fee that is based on hard surfaces such as roofs, pavement, and asphalt is a more equitable way to charge for stormwater.

As part of the implementation of the new stormwater fee, wastewater conveyance rates will decrease since the new stormwater fee will begin to recover the stormwater costs previously included.

Calculating the Stormwater Fee

In Pittsburgh, the average amount of impervious surface on a single-family residential property is approximately 1,650 square feet. This is

For purposes of calculating the stormwater fee, the “residential” fee tiers will apply to all properties with four or fewer residential units. The “non-residential” fee calculation will apply to all other properties (including apartment and condominium buildings with more than four residential units).

Customers can reduce their stormwater fee by installing certain measures to control stormwater runoff from their properties, such as redirecting downspouts into street planters where applicable or installing a rain garden.

Assistance is Available

If you are having trouble paying your PWSA bill, learn

Next Board Meeting: December 17

For a complete list of PWSA's board and community meetings, please visit Pgh2o.com/events-meetings.

Following COVID-19 restrictions, meetings are held virtually and may be tentative or postponed.

about our customer assistance programs by contacting our PGH2O Cares team at **(412) 255-2423 ext. 3107**, emailing cares@pgh2o.com or visit Pgh2o.com/CAP.

As part of the proposed 2022 and 2023 rate changes, we have also requested that the

PUC approve enhancements to our customer assistance programs. These include an 85% discount on the stormwater fee for customers enrolled in the Bill Discount Program, a debt forgiveness program that can help income-qualified households catch up on past due bills, and a financial incentive for consumers to enroll in auto-pay.

More Information

For more information about proposed rate changes, please visit Pgh2o.com/OurWaterFuture. For more information about our plans to manage stormwater and the fee, please visit Pgh2oStormwater.com.



Customer Assistance Programs

Our Customer Assistance Programs are designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their water and sewer bill.

- **Winter Shut Off Moratorium:** December 1st through March 31st for customers who are at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- **Bill Discount Program:** 100% reduction of minimum monthly water and wastewater conveyance charges for customers who are at or below 150% of FPL.
- **Flexible Payment Plans:** We offer payment plans for those earning between 250% and 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) to pay their balance over one to five years without accruing interest or paying additional fees.
- **Hardship Grant Program:** Cash grants up to \$300 per year for customers at or below 150% of FPL.
- **Lead Service Line Reimbursement Program:** PWSA will assist customers with the cost of private lead service line replacement. For more information, visit lead.pgh2o.com/leadreimbursement.

For more information about the Customer Assistance Program, please visit Pgh2o.com/CAP or call Dollar Energy Fund at **866.762.2348**.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Donate to the Hardship Grant Program online at Pgh2o.com/give.

Do We Have Your Number?

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages? It is important to verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

HOW DO I UPDATE MY CONTACT INFORMATION?

Visit our website: Pgh2o.com/update-contact-info
Or call PWSA Customer Service: **412.255.2423 (Press 5)**

Enroll in eBilling

Convenient and easy to use, our online billing and payment portal ensures timely delivery of bills and payments.

Visit Pgh2o.com/ebilling to enroll.

Penn Liberty Plaza 1
1200 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Customer Service
T 412.255.2423 (Press 5)
info@pgh2o.com

Emergency Dispatch
412.255.2423 (Press 1)
Available 24/7

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Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Pittsburghers are known for caring for one another, especially in times of need. Many of your neighbors are struggling to afford the cost of basic water and wastewater service. With your help in this season of giving, the Hardship Grant, an assistance program provided by Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority and administered by Dollar Energy Fund, will distribute financial aid to eligible households in need of assistance with their utility bills.



Hardship Grant Program Facts:

- Has helped more than 630 Pittsburgh households maintain essential water services since 2018
- Provides cash assistance for customers that are at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. This means that a family of four making \$39,750 would qualify
- Distributed more than \$165,000 with an average grant of \$263

Support your neighbors today by making a tax-deductible contribution to the Hardship Grant, and rest assured that 100% of your donation goes directly to Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority customers in need:

- Fill out Dollar Energy Fund's [online donation form](#) or call Dollar Energy Fund at 866-762-2348 and indicate that the donation should go towards PWSA's Hardship Grant Program.
- Mail a check to PO Box 42329, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 and indicate that the donation should go towards PWSA's Hardship Grant Program.

Learn more about our Customer Assistance Programs at Pgh2o.com/CAP and the Hardship Grant Program at Pgh2o.com/give