



STORMWATER GUIDE

FOR COMMERCIAL & NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

PITTSBURGH HAS A STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROBLEM. A problem that impacts our businesses and future development projects.

A combination of heavy rains and aging infrastructure can result in frequent overflow flooding from our combined stormwater and sanitary sewer systems. When more rain falls than the sewers can handle, they overflow. Streets flood. Basements back up. Pollution empties into our rivers. *Everyone is affected.*

The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) with oversight from the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) and a stormwater agreement with city government, is expanding its scope of operations to help manage stormwater.

BETTER STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE CAN HELP. To help meet this challenge, PWSA has engineered a new wave of stormwater infrastructure projects to more effectively manage stormwater. These projects are an investment that focus on protecting properties from localized flooding and reducing the amount of sewage that overflows into our rivers. They are a cost-efficient mix of stormwater solutions that help to promote healthy communities and clean water.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

PWSA's strategic plan targets vulnerable areas most affected by street flooding, basement backups and other negative effects of overwhelmed sewer systems.

We are building innovative stormwater projects that soak up, slow down, and hold back excess water before it reaches our sewers. When combined with traditional stormwater solutions like underground storage, catch basins, and culverts we'll keep more water out of the sewers, there will be fewer backups in homes, and less pollution in our rivers, streams, and other surrounding public spaces. This approach is affordable and effective.



HOW ARE THESE PROJECTS FUNDED?

We believe investing in these projects now will save money by reducing backups and localized flooding that result in expensive property damage. However, these cost-saving stormwater investments still need dedicated funding to get off the ground. PWSA is adopting a strategy similar to thousands of other agencies across the country.

We will charge a fee for our stormwater service, which will fund the improvements and maintenance of stormwater infrastructure based on the amount of hard surface on a property.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE →



HOW ARE THESE PROJECTS FUNDED? CONTINUED

Roofs, pavement, asphalt, and similar hard surfaces do not absorb stormwater. These impervious surfaces collect stormwater and contribute significant amounts of runoff to our sewers. PWSA has used aerial imagery to locate, identify and measure the hard surfaces throughout the City of Pittsburgh. Impervious surface area is the most equitable basis for calculating the stormwater fee.

In the past, stormwater program costs were funded by sewer conveyance charges based on water meter readings. Under the current system, properties that contribute stormwater to the system may not pay their fair share for stormwater management costs. For example, a parking lot owner who does not pay for water and sewer services, but has a large impervious surface pays nothing for stormwater management. Now every parcel in Pittsburgh will receive a bill that more equitably captures the amount of stormwater each property contributes to the sewer system. It is a more fair way to bill for stormwater services.

Rates for non-residential PWSA customers will use the “Equivalent Residential Unit” (ERU) model to determine their rates. The formula for calculating the stormwater fee is: # of ERUs x \$5.96 = Total stormwater fee. 1,015 sq. ft. – 2,710 sq. ft. of impervious surface on a property is the equivalent of one ERU. One ERU, for which PWSA’s 2022 stormwater rate is \$5.96 a month, is the base rate for the city by which all residential and non-residential properties are calculated. For example, if a parking lot is the size of 10 ERUs, the parking lot’s monthly stormwater bill will be \$59.60.



CAN I LOOK UP MY PROPERTY TO UNDERSTAND MY STORMWATER FEE?

Yes, visit www.pgh2o.com/stormwater-fee to search for your property using the Fee Finder Website. Enter your address in the search bar, click inside your property to see the amount of impervious surface and the number of Equivalent Residential Units (ERU’s). To determine your fee amount, multiply the number of ERU’s by the stormwater rate and subtract any credits that may apply.



CAN PROPERTIES GET CREDIT FOR STORMWATER MITIGATION?

PWSA supports efforts to mitigate the impact of impervious surfaces and is developing a credit and incentive program for property owners who reduce their impervious surface area. Under the credit program, replacing hard surfaces with green space, permeable surfaces or implementing other approved stormwater capture techniques will result in a corresponding reduction of the bill a customer receives. The success of PWSA’s stormwater management plan is dependent upon reducing runoff from both public and private properties. For non-residential customers, PWSA will allow a credit of up to 60% of their stormwater fee if they meet 2019 development standards of capturing stormwater on site. A credit of up to 45% would be allowed if 2016 development standards are met.

WE’RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER. Commercial stakeholders are essential to ensuring the success of stormwater management in Pittsburgh. PWSA’s planned stormwater projects are about taking on the challenges of today, but they’re also about the future of our city. An ounce of prevention now will pay dividends for years to come.

Our rivers will be cleaner. Our infrastructure will last longer. Our businesses and homes will be safer. And with an equitable rate structure, everyone contributes their fair share. To learn more, visit www.pgh2o.com/stormwater-fee.

