



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY
IMPERVIOUS SURFACE AREA CHARGE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



The impervious surface area billing program is an investment in reducing pollution in the Anacostia and Potomac rivers and Rock Creek. The charge applies to all lots, parcels, properties and private streets in the District.

Q 1. What is an *impervious surface area charge*?

A The *impervious surface area charge* is based upon the amount of impervious surface on your property. Impervious surface area is used as the basis for this charge since it is a major contributor to rainwater runoff entering the District's sewer system. An impervious surface is a man-made surface that cannot be easily penetrated by water such as rooftops, driveways, patios, parking lots and other paved areas, tennis courts, swimming pools, and any path or walkway that is covered by impervious material.

Q 2. Why is the *impervious surface area charge necessary*?

A The charge is necessary to recover the costs of the \$2.2 billion federally-mandated Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan (CSO LTCP). The 20-year CSO LTCP will reduce the discharge of excess flows into local waterways from the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) combined sewer system. Combined sewer systems were constructed around the turn of the 19th century to carry sanitary sewage and rainwater runoff in the same pipe.

Q 3. Why did WASA decide to allocate the costs of the CSO LTCP in this manner?

A The cost of combined sewer overflow control has been part of the sewer rate, which is based on the metered amount of water usage. The WASA Board of Directors determined that the *impervious surface area charge* is a more equitable basis to recover the costs of the CSO LTCP than the volumetric charge, since the charge is based on a property's contribution to rainwater runoff.

Q 4. Why has WASA decided to bill for this charge now?

A The CSO LTCP program is underway and already incurring program costs. Therefore, the charge is being designed now to reallocate costs from the sewer charge currently appearing on the WASA bill to the impervious surface charge. This more appropriately recovers costs from those who most contribute to the need for wet weather management.

Q 5. How is the amount of the charge determined?

A The charge is based upon an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). An ERU is defined as the amount of impervious surface area measured in square feet based on a statistical median for a single family residential property. Initially, all residential customers will be assessed one (1) ERU. All non-residential customers shall be assessed ERU's based upon the total amount of impervious surface on each lot. This total amount of impervious surface will be converted into ERU's.

Q 6. Who sets the *impervious surface area charge*?

A The WASA Board of Directors sets the *impervious surface area charge*. In FY 2009, each ERU will be billed at \$1.24 a month.

Q 7. Is the *impervious surface area charge* a one-time fee?

A No. WASA customers will see this charge on their monthly bill beginning May 2009.

Q 8. Do other cities have an *impervious surface area charge*?

A Yes. Other cities have this charge to cover the cost of managing pollution from rainwater runoff.