



City of West Park

Stormwater Utility

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is rain that runs off surfaces such as rooftops, paved streets highways, and parking lots into storm drain systems, lakes canals, streams and rivers.

2. What is Stormwater Utility?

Stormwater Utility is a “stand-alone” service unit within the City government which generates revenues through fees for services. The Florida Legislature, through adoption of section 403.0893, Florida Statutes, specifically authorizes and encourages local governments to provide stormwater management services as a utility function for which service charges may be levied. A stormwater utility is responsible for funding the operation, construction, maintenance of stormwater system, for stormwater system master planning and improvement and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.



3. Why do I have to pay a fee to the stormwater Utility?



Rainwater is either absorbed into porous surfaces like grass, forest, farm fields, vacant parcel of land, and other areas of “open ground”, or the rainwater collects on non-porous (impervious) surfaces like streets, built-out vacant lot, and parking lots. It is these impervious areas where rainwater collects that is the challenge for stormwater planners. A developed vacant lot creates impact to needed drainage systems in the area, because of the removed porous surface. You also pay a fee to the stormwater utility because of the silt, oil, gasoline, fertilizers, pesticides and other litter that is carried by the stormwater to the drainage systems that have been developed to prevent flooding during heavy rainfall. The stormwater utility funds a wide variety of activities and programs that reduce flooding and pollution.

4. What is an impervious area?

An impervious area is any part or parcel of land that has been changed by actions of persons to reduce the land’s natural ability to soak up or hold rainfall. This includes areas that have been cleared, graded, paved, graveled, compacted or covered with structures. This excludes lawn areas, landscape areas, and gardens or farming (agricultural) areas.

5. How much is the fee?

Each single-family parcel will be charged a fee. A typical West Park resident lot is considered one Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) of impervious area and will pay \$3.50 per month or \$ 21.00 per 6 months, or \$ 42.00 per year. Non-residential developed parcels will be charged based on how many ERU’s or runoff is generated from the parcel, at \$3.50 per ERU, per month.

6. How is the stormwater fee calculated?

The City uses an engineering approach to determine its fee structure. The City obtained the size of a given property that is “impervious” to rainwater and calculates the fee based on the figure that way. The stormwater utility is charging a fee based on the runoff generated from those impervious surfaces (like rooftops and parking lots), since this runoff is what the stormwater utility is going to have to handle.

The City conducted a statistical analysis to establish on Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) for residential properties. The value of the ERU is set at 1, 351 square feet and incurs a charge of \$3.50 per month for residential properties. The \$3.50 a month stormwater utility fee is one of the lowest rates in Florida.

Commercial, industrial and non-residential properties are calculated using the same ERU concept, but account for the exact footage of a facility and all impervious surfaces when determining the total monthly stormwater utility fee.

To determine the stormwater utility fee for non-residential properties, take the total square footage of the property's impervious surfaces, divide by 1,351 (size of one ERU) and multiply by \$3.50 (the cost of one ERU). As an example, a non-residential property with a total impervious area of 4,053 square feet would pay \$10.50 per month in stormwater utility fee $\{(4,053/1,351)* \$3.50 = \$ 10.50\}$.

7. Is this a tax and why is my stormwater utility fee on my water bill ?

The charge is a service fee, not a tax. In addition, in an effort to reduce overall costs for the processing of bills and postage costs, we asked the county to include the stormwater utility fee in the water bill. The cost savings and greater efficiency of operation are passed on to all stormwater utility customers. Customers without water accounts receive their stormwater utility bill separately.

8. How long will you be charging me this fee?

The fee will be collected in perpetuity to ensure adequate maintenance of the City's drainage systems, within right-of-ways.

9. What are the problems with Stormwater?

Pollution: Every time it rains, the rainwater that is not absorbed into the ground or evaporated (called runoff) will carry contaminants from lawns, streets, buildings and parking lots and deposits them directly into our City through the underground storm sewer system. Better pollution control and treatment is needed to reduce the amount of contamination flowing into our local water bodies.

Flooding: Early stormwater management practices focused on preventing flooding. Because of rigorous design standards and City capital investment, flooding from rain storms has been dramatically reduced; however, trouble spots still remain.



10. What is an NPDES permit?

The Clean Water Act prohibits anybody from discharging "pollutants" through a "point source" into a "water of the United States" unless they have an NPDES permit. The permit will contain limits on what you can discharge, monitoring and reporting requirements, and other provisions to ensure that the discharge does not hurt water quality or people's health. In essence, the permit translates general requirements of the Clean Water Act into specific provisions tailored to the operations of each person discharging pollutants.

11. What is the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program?

Polluted stormwater runoff is a leading cause of impairment to the nearly 40 percent of surveyed U.S. water bodies which do not meet water quality standards. Over land or via storm sewer systems, polluted runoff is discharged, often untreated, directly into local water bodies. When left uncontrolled, this water pollution can result in the destruction of fish, wildlife, and aquatic life habitats; a loss in aesthetic value; and threats to public health due to contaminated food, drinking water supplies, and recreational waterways.



Mandated by Congress under the Clean Water Act, the NPDES Stormwater Program is a comprehensive two-phased national program for addressing the non-agricultural sources of stormwater discharges which adversely affect the quality of our nation's waters. The program uses the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting mechanism to require the implementation of controls designed to prevent harmful pollutants from being washed by stormwater runoff into local water bodies

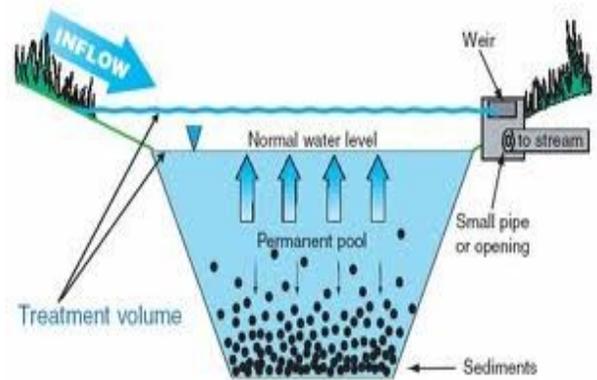
12. What is polluted runoff?

Pollution runoff is water from rain event that either seeps into the ground or “runs off” to lower areas, making its way into streams, lakes and other water bodies. On its way, runoff water can pick up and carry many substances that pollute water.

Some - like pesticides, fertilizers, oil and soap – are harmful in any quantity. Others – like sediment from construction, bare soil, or agricultural land, or pet waste, grass clippings and leaves – can harm creeks, rivers and lakes in sufficient quantities.

In addition to rain, various human activities like watering, car washing, and malfunctioning septic tank can also put water onto the land surface. Here, it can also create runoff that carries pollutants to lakes.

Polluted runoff generally happens anywhere people use or alter the land. For example, in developed areas, none of the water that falls on hard surfaces like roofs, driveways, parking lots or roads can seep into the ground. These impervious surfaces create large amounts of runoff that picks up pollutants. The runoff flows from gutters and storm drains to streams. Runoff not only pollutes but erodes lakes and stream banks. The mix of pollution and eroded dirt muddies the water and causes problems downstream.



13. What can I do to reduce the amount of stormwater pollution I contribute?

If you own a car, maintain it so it does not leak oil or other fluids. Be sure to wash it on the grass or at a car wash so the dirt and soap do not flow down the driveway and into the nearest storm drain.

If you own a yard, do not over fertilize your grass. Never apply fertilizers or pesticides before a heavy rain. If fertilizer falls onto driveways or sidewalks, sweep it up instead of hosing it away. Mulch leaves and grass clippings and place leaves in the yard at the curb, not in the street. Doing this keeps leaves out of the gutter, where they can wash into the nearest storm drain. Turn your gutter downspouts away from hard surfaces, seed bare spots in your yard to avoid erosion and consider building a rain garden in low-lying areas of your lawn

If you have a septic system, maintain it properly by having it pumped every three to five years. If it is an older system, be sure it can still handle the volume placed on it today. Never put chemicals down septic systems, they can harm the system and seep into the groundwater.

Pet owners should pick up after their pets and dispose of pet waste in the garbage. Keep lawn and household chemicals tightly sealed and in a place where rain cannot reach them. Dispose of old or unwanted chemicals at household hazardous waste collections sites or events. Never put anything in a storm drain. Don't litter.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL CITY HALL AT

PH: 954-989-2688 OR FAX: 954-989-2684