

## Understanding Baltimore City’s Stormwater Fee

Stormwater runoff originates during precipitation when water flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces such as streets and rooftops increase runoff by preventing water from soaking into the ground. Water running over impervious surfaces can pick up sediment, chemicals, debris, and toxins which are carried to local waterways. These pollutants prevent waterways from being fishable and swimmable.

In 2012, the State of Maryland passed the Watershed Protection and Restoration Program (HB-987) which mandates that counties subject to a certain municipal stormwater permit institute a stormwater remediation fee. The purpose of the charge is to manage pollution carried by stormwater into local waterways.

The collected charges are placed in a *dedicated fund* and used to finance projects that treat and transport polluted stormwater. Examples of these projects include, but are not limited to, street sweeping, storm drain cleaning, stormwater facility inspection, maintenance and upgrades, tree planting, water quality monitoring, watershed planning, and stormwater educational programming. The stormwater remediation fee is similar to fees for other public services such as sewer, drinking water, and state highways.

### Who has to pay the Stormwater Remediation Fee?

The stormwater remediation fee applies to the nine largest counties in Maryland (Anne

Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George’s) and Baltimore City, which are federally required to treat stormwater runoff. Residents, businesses, and institutions in these areas are all required to pay the fee. The fee structure is established independently by each county/city and differs across the State.

### What does the Stormwater Remediation Fee look like in Baltimore?

**Residential properties** will pay a three-tiered fixed flat fee annually for single family properties. The fees are organized by area of impervious surface:

Impervious Surface	Flat Fee
< 820 sq. ft	\$10/quarter
820 – 1,500 sq. ft.	\$15/quarter
> 1,500 sq. ft.	\$30/quarter

**Commercial, industrial, and institutional properties** will pay per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), which is calculated as the weighted average of impervious surfaces per a representative sample of the City’s single family properties. In Baltimore City, that value is 1,050 square feet. The charge per ERU is \$15/ERU/quarter.

Buildings used by religious non-profits for worship or K-12 education services will be billed at \$3/ERU/quarter. The remaining impervious surfaces of these properties will be charged the full ERU rate.

The number of ERUs is calculated and rounded to the nearest whole number. The fee will remain stable for the next four years.

**Example ERU Calculation:**

7,500 Sq Ft Impervious Area  
÷1,050 Sq Ft/ERU  
7.14 ERUs (round to 7)  
×\$15/ERU/quarter  
\$105/quarter

***Hardship reductions and credit/incentive programs:***

A residential hardship reduction will apply to owner-occupied dwellings which are already approved for senior citizen or low-income discounts on their water and wastewater bills.

The City of Baltimore offers credit for simple stormwater best management practices (BMPs) such as rain gardens, rainwater harvesting systems, or tree planting and public participation volunteer hours. BMP credits last for three years before they must be renewed.

All applicants must sign a right of entry for Public Works' inspection and customers wishing to install more complex BMPs should complete documentation to meet Maryland Department of the Environment standards.

The public participation credit must be renewed annually and requires residents to volunteer 8 hours for a \$10 credit. Residents who participate for a maximum of 24 hours will earn a \$30 credit annually. The event must be within City limits and have Department of Public Works approval 30 days prior to the event.

*To download a credit application or find values for each credit please visit:*

[www.cleanwaterbaltimore.org](http://www.cleanwaterbaltimore.org).

***What can I do to help address stormwater runoff pollution?***

Among other practices, residents can install rain barrels, rain gardens, and porous pavers, and practice Bay-Wise landscaping to help in the fight against stormwater runoff.

Always remember with stormwater - *slow it down* and *soak it up!*

### **Additional Resources**

Maryland Department of the Environment

Stormwater Fee FAQ:

<http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Maryland/Pages/StormwaterFeeFAQ.aspx>

Baltimore City Stormwater Fee webpage:

<http://www.cleanwaterbaltimore.org/Stormwater-Remediation-Fee-Information.asp>

House Bill 987:

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?ys=2012rs%2fbillfile%2fhb0987.htm>

Contact Krisztian Varsa ([kvarsa@umd.edu](mailto:kvarsa@umd.edu), (410) 771-1761), University of Maryland Sea Grant Extension, Watershed Restoration Specialist for Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll and Harford Counties, to answer your questions about the fee and what you can do to reduce stormwater runoff.

*Please note: This factsheet is intended to provide an overview of the stormwater remediation fee at the time of publication. For more updates and information please go to: [www.cleanwaterbaltimore.org](http://www.cleanwaterbaltimore.org).*

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