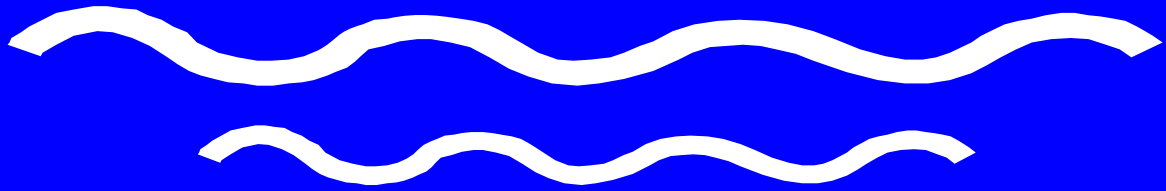


City of Superior



*Stormwater
Utility*



Frequently Asked Questions

Revised July 2008

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is rain or snowmelt that falls on streets, parking areas, rooftops and other developed land and either flows directly into nearby streams or travels there through drainage systems, such as curbs and gutters, inlets, storm sewers, detention ponds and channels.

What is a stormwater utility?

The City of Superior's Stormwater Utility is a public utility organized as a separate enterprise in the same fashion as the City's Wastewater Utility. Assets managed by the Stormwater Utility include storm sewers, culverts, detention basins, and equipment used for managing the storm drainage system. The Utility is given the responsibility of providing for the public needs in the area of storm water management and compliance with federal and state laws. The Utility charges fees for operation and maintenance of facilities and for capital improvements. The Utility works to solve current drainage problems, prevent future problems, as well as repair, maintain, and enhance those facilities already constructed.

What is impervious surface?

Impervious surfaces do not allow rain or snowmelt to infiltrate (soak in) at the same rate as natural surfaces, like grass or forested areas. Impervious areas include, but are not limited to, all areas covered by structures, roofs, patios, decks, porches, driveways, loading docks, parking lots, sidewalks, and compacted clay and gravel which are used as driveways or parking lots.

Why is my gravel driveway considered impervious surface?

Gravel and compacted clay driveways do not allow rain to soak into the ground at the same rate as in undeveloped areas. They also contribute particulates the runoff which does occur.

Is the City charging us for rain?

While the Stormwater Utility is in place to manage the pollution carried by stormwater runoff, the fee is in no way related to the amount of rain that falls. The fee is in place to fund the ongoing maintenance and capital improvements to the entire public storm drainage infrastructure, as well as other water quality improvements and flood hazard mitigation programs.

What is an ERU?

One ERU (Equivalent Runoff Unit) is equal to 1907 square feet of impervious area, the statistical average for a single-family home in the City of Superior.

Where can I get more information?

You can contact the Stormwater Utility hotline at (715) 394-2761. You will be asked to record your name, address, and Customer ID from your bill along with your phone number or e-mail address and a brief statement of why you are calling. This will allow City staff to research each circumstance more fully so that we have answers when we contact you.

Additional information can be found on our website at www.ci.superior.wi.us/swu.

STORMWATER PROGRAM FUNDING SOLUTIONS

How did the City decide to create a Stormwater Utility?

A Water Quality Advisory Team evaluated several funding options and recommended that a Stormwater Utility be formed to manage the stormwater system and programs. The meetings were open to the public and advertised in the Superior Daily Telegram.

Why is a Stormwater Utility the best solution?

A stormwater utility is the most equitable method to generate the necessary revenue needed to operate and maintain the City's stormwater system, meet the requirements of the federal water quality permit and add capital improvements to mitigate existing flooding, erosion and sedimentation problems. Stormwater Utility charges are based on the amount of impervious area on a property which directly relates to the volume of excess runoff and the demand the property places on the stormwater conveyance system.

How is a fee different from a tax?

A fee is a charge for the purpose of defraying the cost of a particular service, such as the management of stormwater runoff. The fee revenue can only be spent to provide that service. A tax is imposed on property, acts, events, or occurrences to provide revenue to pay any of the general expenses of government. Tax revenue can be used to pay for any number of government activities, such as police, fire, zoning, streets, etc.

What are the main benefits of a fee vs. a tax?

There are three main benefits:

1. A fee provides a dedicated source of revenue that can only be used on stormwater management.
2. Fees are charged based on impacts or costs of managing the stormwater system and water quality. Taxes are assessed based on property value which is not directly related to managing stormwater runoff.
3. Stormwater management projects do not have to compete for the limited dollars in the City's General Fund.

Who must pay or who is exempt?

The fee must be paid by residential, commercial, industrial, non-profit, and governmental agencies that own developed parcels. There are no exemptions for developed parcels. Undeveloped parcels with no impervious surface will not be charged.

Is the Stormwater Utility really needed?

The needs that the Stormwater Utility will address are very real. Property owners in Superior will all benefit from the Utility. First, there will be a better-maintained storm sewer system. Also, due to more adequate funding, flood control projects will be completed. Further, the City will avoid fines that could be assessed by the State of Wisconsin or EPA for not abiding with the Stormwater Permit requirements. The Stormwater Utility is needed to protect the health and safety of the public by preventing costly deterioration of our storm sewer system.

RATES/FEEES

How much will I have to pay?

The stormwater fee is a two-part fee, a fixed (administrative) fee and a variable (impervious area) fee.

- The fixed fee covers the costs for utility administration and billing. This fee is \$2.00 per customer per month.
- The variable fee, which is based on the impervious area of the property, covers the cost of the programs required by our stormwater permit. This fee is \$3.90 per Equivalent Runoff Unit (ERU) per month.

All single-family unit locations will pay the minimum charge of \$5.90 per month. Non single-family customers will have a bill dependent upon the amount of impervious area on their property.

Will all properties have to pay?

All developed parcels with impervious area will be charged a stormwater fee. Undeveloped lots or properties with no impervious surfaces will not be charged a fee. Customers required to pay the fee include private property, non-profit, commercial, industrial, office, government and residential property owners.

Who will pay the fees for public buildings?

Properties including public buildings owned by the City of Superior, Douglas County, or the State of Wisconsin are required to pay the fees. These costs are incorporated into their operating expenses.

Why aren't nonprofits exempt from the fee?

All developed properties contribute to the problems and costs associated with stormwater management. The fee, based on the amount of impervious surface on a property, is the most equitable method of distributing the cost. Non-profits are not exempt from paying for other utility services like electricity or water and in the same way will not be exempt from paying the stormwater fee.

Will a fee be assessed against the street and highway system?

Although streets are impervious surfaces, the street and highway systems are part of the stormwater conveyance system just like ditches, culverts, and storm sewers. Without the roadways, the City's stormwater system would not function. No public streets or highways will be charged, however private roads on private lands will be assessed the stormwater fee, because they contribute runoff to the stormwater conveyance system.

Why aren't private streets exempt if public streets are?

Only public streets are part of the City's stormwater conveyance system. Maintenance and stormwater costs for private streets are borne by the landowner.

How will you determine pervious from impervious area?

Technicians determine the impervious surfaces on a property from aerial photographs and field inspections. There may be instances where a pervious surface may look impervious in the photographs. In those instances, customers can contact the City for a review and determination of the impervious area on their property. Customers will also be able to appeal the determination of the amount of impervious surface. For more information on determining impervious area, see Page 12.

Why do I have to pay if I live on high ground or in a dip?

Every property in the City has stormwater runoff that contributes to existing water quantity and quality problems in Lake Superior and the St. Louis River. Therefore, every property contributes to the need for proper runoff management and storm sewer system maintenance. Driveways, parking areas and rooftops on every property in the City contribute to the amount of stormwater that must be managed. It is the most equitable funding method to have all developed properties pay a fee that is proportional to the amount of stormwater that runs off of each property.

Why do I have to pay if I don't contribute to stormwater?

If you own property that has been developed with impervious surfaces (i.e. rooftops, sidewalks, driveways, etc.), you do contribute to stormwater runoff. These impervious areas do not allow rain or snowmelt to infiltrate as it would on a natural surface. It is important to note that the stormwater fee will pay for citywide improvements to the storm sewer system and will also fund compliance with the federally mandated Stormwater Permit. These improvements and permit programs support and apply to the entire City.

Why do I have to pay if my roof drains onto my grass?

Even if all of the runoff from your property is directed to pervious surfaces (such as grass), it is highly unlikely that during a 100-year rain event all of the runoff can be absorbed without discharging any to adjacent driveways, sidewalks or streets. During a 100-year rain event even the grassy areas will have runoff, so they would not be effective in absorbing runoff from impervious areas.

Will I pay less if it doesn't rain?

No, but you won't pay more when it rains a lot either. Operation and maintenance activities will occur year round, not just when it is raining.

BILLING

When will the City be billing customers?

Customers will be billed on a semi-annual basis. The billing periods are January 1 through June 30, 2008 and July 1 through December 31. Bills will be mailed in January and July for the prior six months.

When will bills be due?

Bills are due in full by the last day in February and the last day in August.

How will you bill multi-family units?

The registered property owner will receive the bill. It is up to that owner to determine how, or if, he/she will pass on that cost to the tenants of a multi-family property. In a Homeowner Association (HOA) situation, the HOA will be billed for common areas.

How will billing be handled for stores that lease space?

Bills will be sent to the property owner. It is up to the property owner to determine how the cost will be distributed among the tenants.

Will county or state properties in the city limits be assessed?

The City of Superior will assess all parcels within the corporate limits of the City of Superior. This includes properties owned by the City of Superior, Douglas County and the State of Wisconsin.

Will religious entities or non-profits be assessed?

Yes. The City of Superior will assess all parcels within the corporate limits of the City of Superior. This includes properties owned by religious facilities, service organizations, housing authorities, youth facilities, etc.

Will the fee change in the future?

The City Council has the ability to adjust the rate by resolution. The fee will be re-evaluated once the City completes an assessment of the condition of the storm sewer system. New requirements in the state permit could also require a rate adjustment.

What if I don't pay?

All balances in arrears on November 1 of each year shall become a lien on the real estate and shall be inserted in the tax rolls for collection in accordance with the procedure set forth in state statute.

CREDITS

Who is eligible for a Credit?

Only non-single-family customers are eligible. Single-family customers are already paying the minimum charge.

What Credits are available?

There are two (2) types of credits available, the Water Quality Credit and the Receiving Water (RW) Credit.

What is the Water Quality credit?

The Water Quality credit is for treating and/or attenuating water before it enters the City's stormwater conveyance system using an approved structural stormwater Best Management Practice (BMP).

- The full Water Quality credit is 59.02% of the variable fee.
- For customers only treating their stormwater (Water Quality Treatment Credit) or slowing it down (Water Quality Peak Flow Credit) but not both, 29.51% of the variable fee is available.
- The credit only applies to the impervious area that drains to the BMP, not all the impervious area on the property.

What stormwater BMPs qualify for the Water Quality credit?

BMPs eligible for Water Quality Treatment Credit are:

- Constructed Stormwater Wetlands
- Wet Detention Basins

BMPs eligible for Water Quality Peak Flow Credit are:

- Constructed Stormwater Wetlands
- Wet Detention Basins
- Dry Detention Basins
- In-Pipe or underground Storage

What is the RW credit?

The Receiving Water (RW) credit is for customers whose stormwater never enters any portion of the City's conveyance system and drains directly into Lake Superior or the St. Louis River.

- The RW credit is 68.09% of the variable fee.
- The credit only applies to the impervious area that is tributary to the RW, not all the impervious area on the property.

What Receiving Waters qualify for the Receiving Waters Credit?

Waters entering either Lake Superior or the St. Louis River qualify for the credit.

How do I apply for a Credit?

Credit workshops will be scheduled to explain how the credit process works and provide the technical and performance standards that will be required.

Stormwater Permit Regulations

Who Issued the City's Stormwater Permit?

The Wisconsin DNR developed the Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) Storm Water Discharge Permit Program to meet the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act. The City of Superior received WPDES General Permit WI-S050075-1 with a start date of April 1, 2007.

What Is Required By The Permit?

The General Permit requires the City to develop a program for 1) Public Education and Outreach, 2) Public Involvement and Participation, 3) Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, 4) Construction Site Pollutant Control, 5) Post-Construction Storm Water Management, 6) Pollution Prevention, 7) Storm Water Quality Management, 8) Storm Sewer System Map and 9) Annual Reporting.

What Is Required For Public Education and Outreach?

We must implement a program to increase the awareness of stormwater pollution impacts on waters of the state that encourages changes in public behavior. The program must include the following elements:

- Promote detection and elimination of illicit discharges.
- Inform and educate the public about the proper management of materials that may cause storm water pollution from sources including automobiles, pet waste, household hazardous waste, etc.
- Promote composting of leaves and grass clippings and proper use of fertilizers and pesticides.
- Promote the management of streambanks and shorelines by riparian landowners.
- Promote infiltration of storm water runoff from rooftop downspouts, driveways and sidewalks.
- Inform and educate those responsible for the design, installation, and maintenance of construction site erosion control practices and storm water management facilities.
- Identify businesses and activities that may pose a storm water contamination concern, and where appropriate, educate specific audiences on methods of storm water pollution prevention.
- Promote environmentally sensitive land development designs by developers and designers.

What Is Required For Public Involvement and Participation?

We must implement a program to notify the public of activities required by this permit and encourage input and participation from the public regarding these activities, and include measurable goals.

What Is Required For Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination?

We must develop, implement and enforce a program to detect and remove illicit connections and discharges to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). The program must include all of the following:

- An ordinance to prevent and eliminate illicit discharges and connections to the MS4.
- Initial field screening at all major outfalls during dry weather periods.
- On-going dry weather field screening of suspect outfalls during the term of the permit.
- Procedures for responding to known or suspected illicit discharges.
- Procedures to remove illicit discharges from our system as soon as possible.
- The name, title and phone number of the individual(s) responsible for the program.
- Appropriate best management practices (BMPs) and measurable goals for this minimum control measure.

What Is An Illicit Discharge?

Illicit discharges are discharges into the stormwater conveyance system that are not composed entirely of stormwater. Illicit discharges often include sediment, nutrients, bacteria, and toxic pollutants.

What Is The Effect Of These Pollutants On Our Environment?

- Sediment**
 - Sediment is often viewed as the largest pollutant load associated with stormwater runoff in an urban setting. The loadings have been shown to be exceptionally high in the case of construction activity.
 - Sediment is associated with numerous impacts in surface waters including increased turbidity, effects on aquatic and benthic habitat and reduction in capacity of impoundments.
 - Other pollutants often attach to, and are carried by, sediment particles.
- Nutrients**
 - The nutrients of concern in stormwater runoff are phosphorus and nitrogen.
 - In surface waters, these nutrient loads can lead to heavy algae growth, and low dissolved oxygen levels.
 - Nutrients enter the urban system in a variety of ways, including landscaping practices, leaks from sanitary sewers and septic systems, and animal wastes.
- Bacteria**
 - High bacterial levels may be found in stormwater runoff as a result of leaking sanitary systems, garbage, pet waste, etc.
 - The impacts of bacteria on surface waters may affect recreational uses and aquatic life as well as impose health risks.
- Toxic Substances**
 - Many toxic substances are associated with urban stormwater including metals, pesticides, herbicides and hydrocarbons.
 - Toxic compounds may affect biological systems, and accumulate in bottom sediments of surface waters.

How Can You Help?

- Never dump anything down a storm drain.
- Dispose of yard and pet waste properly.
- Avoid excess use of lawn fertilizers.
- Wash your car on your lawn or at a car wash facility.
- Make sure sanitary, laundry, carwash, and industrial waste doesn't drain to the storm sewer.
- De-chlorinate pool water before draining.
- Be aware of storm drains that have measurable flow during dry conditions, and report flows that have a noticeable odor, discoloration, or oily sheen.

What Is Required For Construction Site Pollutant (Erosion) Control?

We must develop, implement and enforce a program to reduce the discharge of sediment and construction materials from construction sites. The program must:

- Have an ordinance or other regulatory mechanism requiring the implementation of proper erosion and sediment controls, and controls for other wastes, on applicable construction sites;
- Have procedures for site plan review of construction plans;
- Have procedures for site inspection and enforcement of control measures;
- Have sanctions to ensure compliance;
- Establish procedures for the receipt and consideration of information submitted by the public;
- Determine the appropriate best management practices (BMPs) and measurable goals for this minimum control measure.

What Is Required For Post-Construction Storm Water Management?

We must develop, implement, and enforce a program to reduce pollutants in post-construction runoff to the MS4 from new development and redevelopment projects that result in the land disturbance of greater than or equal to 1 acre. We must:

- Have an ordinance or other regulatory mechanism requiring the implementation of post-construction runoff controls to the extent allowable under State, Tribal or local law;
- Develop and implement strategies which include a combination of structural and/or non-structural BMPs;
- Ensure adequate long-term operation and maintenance of controls;
- Determine the appropriate BMPs and measurable goals for this minimum control measure.

What Is Required For Pollution Prevention?

Develop and implement a pollution prevention program that establishes measurable goals for pollution prevention. The program shall include:

- Routine inspection and maintenance of municipally owned or operated structural stormwater management facilities to maintain their pollutant removal operating efficiency.
- Routine street sweeping and cleaning of catch basins with sumps where appropriate.
- Proper disposal of street sweeping and catch basin cleaning waste.
- Apply no more road salt or other deicers than necessary to maintain public safety.
- Proper management of leaves and grass clippings, which may include on-site beneficial reuse as opposed to collection.
- Storm water pollution prevention planning for municipal garages, storage areas and other sources of storm water pollution from municipal facilities.
- Application of lawn and garden fertilizers on municipally controlled properties, with pervious surfaces over 5 acres each, in accordance with a site-specific nutrient application schedule based on appropriate soil tests.
- Education of appropriate municipal and other personnel involved in implementing this program.
- Measures to reduce municipal sources of storm water contamination within source water protection areas.

What Is Required For Storm Water Quality Management?

We must develop and implement a municipal storm water management program. The program must include:

- Implementation of storm water management practices necessary to achieve a 20% reduction in the annual average mass of total suspended solids discharging from the MS4 to surface waters of the state as compared to implementing no storm water management controls, by March 31, 2009. The total suspended solids reduction increases to 40% by March 10, 2013.
- Evaluation of all municipally owned or operated structural flood control facilities to determine the feasibility of retrofitting to increase total suspended solids removal from runoff.
- Assessment of compliance for reduction in pollutant loading, by conducting an analysis using a computer model such as SLAMM, P8 or equivalent methodology.

What Is Required For Stormsewer Mapping?

We must develop and maintain a municipal storm sewer system (MS4) map. The map must include:

- Waters of the state, name and classification of receiving water(s), identification of whether the receiving water is an ORW, ERW or listed as an impaired water, storm water drainage basin boundaries for each MS4 outfall and MS4 conveyance systems.
- Known threatened or endangered resources, historical property and wetlands.
- MS4 outfalls discharging to waters of the state and other MS4s.
- Location of any known discharge to the MS4 that has been issued permit coverage by the DNR.
- Location of municipally owned or operated structural storm water management facilities including detention basins, infiltration basins, and manufactured treatment devices.
- Identification of publicly owned parks, recreational areas and other open lands.
- Location of municipal garages, storage areas and other public works facilities.
- Identification of streets.

What Is Required For The Annual Report?

The annual report must include:

- The status of implementing the permit requirements, status of meeting measurable program goals and compliance with permit schedules.
- A fiscal analysis which includes the annual expenditures and budget for the reporting year, and the budget for the next year.
- A summary of the number and nature of inspections and enforcement actions.
- Identification of any known water quality improvements or degradation. Where degradation is identified, identify why and what actions are being taken to improve the water quality of the receiving water.
- A duly authorized representative of the City must sign and certify the annual report and include a resolution that the City Council has reviewed or been apprised of the content of the annual report.

What Is the Compliance Timeline?

<i>Date</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
<i>9/30/08</i>	Submit public education and outreach program Submit public involvement and participation program Submit construction site pollutant control ordinance Submit construction site inspection and enforcement procedures Submit post-construction storm water management ordinance Submit long-term maintenance procedures
<i>3/31/2009</i>	Submit illicit discharge ordinance Submit illicit discharge response procedures Submit pollution prevention program Submit evaluation of flood control structures Submit assessment of compliance Submit MS4 map
<i>3/31/2010</i>	Complete initial field screening Submit on-going field screening plans

How Is Impervious Area Calculated?

An aerial photo was taken in 2006. The parcel information is laid on top of the aerial. The blue lines represent parcel boundaries. Technicians select the section of the map they need to work on and expand it.



They zoom in on the area they will be working on so it is close enough to identify the impervious surfaces.

Because the photo is taken at an angle in this location they must be careful to digitize the actual footprint of where the building is and not the top or roof or shadow.



The digitized area is seen in light yellow with a red border. Once the shapes are drawn in for the impervious areas, the computer program calculates how many square feet there are. This is then converted into the number of Equivalent Runoff Units that you see on your bill.