



STORMWATER FAQs

Table of Contents

Stormwater Program Questions	3
What is MS4?	3
Why has the importance and cost of stormwater management increased?	3
What aspects of stormwater must be addressed to meet these new regulations?	3
What are BMPs?	4
How do I affect stormwater runoff?	4
What is Impervious area?	4
What is an illicit discharge and how do I report one?	4
Stormwater Utility Fee Questions.....	5
How did you come up with the cost of the Stormwater Utility Fee?	5
How much is the Stormwater Utility Fee?	5
Where does the money collected from the Stormwater Utility Fee go?	5
Does everyone in the Borough pay the fee, including non-profits?.....	5
How is this different from a tax?	6
Why not just include the stormwater program costs in our property taxes?	6
Can I appeal how much I'm being charged?	6
Is there a way to reduce my fee?.....	6
How are impervious surfaces determined?	6
There are no storm sewers on or near my property. Why should I pay a fee?	6
How will properties be billed?	7
How is unoccupied property treated?	7
How is undeveloped property treated?.....	7
Doesn't the Borough already have a stormwater system in place? Nothing has changed on my property, so why will I be charged now?	7
Why should I pay for rain falling on my property?	7

Stormwater Program Questions

What is MS4?

MS4 stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System. This system is owned and operated by a public body, in our case the Borough, and includes inlets, basins, man-made channels, storm drains, and various other stormwater conveyance systems.

Why has the importance and cost of stormwater management increased?

In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is charged with regulating stormwater pursuant to the Clean Water Act (CWA). Portions of the stormwater requirements of the federal CWA are administered under the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (PADEP) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program. As part of our MS4 permit, Steelton Borough is faced with new unfunded mandates, resulting in the need to spend considerably more money over the five-year permit cycle than ever before to improve water quality.

What aspects of stormwater must be addressed to meet these new regulations?

Steelton Borough is required to complete pollutant reduction planning and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce pollution loadings entering our local waterways. Over the current permit term, we are required to reduce sediment by 10%, phosphorus by 5% and nitrogen by 3%. In addition, there are six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) that the Borough is mandated to follow, each containing their own set of BMPs. The six MCMs are listed below with examples of their BMPs:

1. Public Education and Outreach on Stormwater Impacts: Distribute educational materials in the form of a newsletter, flyer, or a website that includes general stormwater educational information.
2. Public Involvement and Participation: Provide opportunities for residents to participate and provide input in the form of public meetings or other events.
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination: Develop and implement a plan for the detection, elimination, and prevention of illicit discharges to the storm sewer system.
4. Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control: Develop, implement, and enforce an erosion and sediment control program for construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land.
5. Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) in New Development and Redevelopment: Develop, implement, and enforce a program to address discharges or post construction stormwater runoff from new development and redevelopment areas. Applicable controls could be the use of structural BMPs such as vegetated swales and detention basins.
6. Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping: Develop and implement an operations and maintenance (O&M) program that includes training components and plans to reduce polluted runoff from municipal operations.

What are BMPs?

Stormwater management BMPs--or Best Management Practices—are control measures used to improve water quality by reducing contaminants that enter local waterways. BMPs are designed to reduce stormwater volume, peak flows, and nonpoint source pollution through evapotranspiration, infiltration, detention, and filtration. Examples of BMPs include stream bank stabilization, detention basin retrofits, rain gardens, bio swales, permeable pavement, street sweeping and installation of community rain gardens.

How do I affect stormwater runoff?

Stormwater management involves managing rainwater that is not absorbed by our lawns and gardens. Impervious surface on your property may impact the quantity of stormwater runoff that will be managed by Steelton Borough. Also, household tasks such as car washing and use of fertilizer can impact stormwater quality. All residents utilize the stormwater system, and everyone should play a role in supporting its maintenance and upkeep.

What is Impervious area?

Impervious area is any surface which prevents infiltration of rainfall into the soil. This includes pavement (asphalt, concrete, etc.), rooftops, decks/patios, pools, sidewalks, and compacted graveled surfaces such as parking areas and driveways.

What is an illicit discharge and how do I report one?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines illicit discharges as “any discharge to the storm sewer system that is not composed entirely of stormwater.” Illicit discharges can be from car wash wastewater, spills from roadway accidents, failed septic systems, and improper disposal of household toxins and detergents. These substances can either enter our waterways through direct connections or indirect connections. It is always good to monitor the stormwater inlets near your property. If you see someone dumping, please call the Borough Office at 717-939-9842.

Stormwater Utility Fee Questions

How did you come up with the cost of the Stormwater Utility Fee?

The Stormwater Utility Fee is the result of discussions between Steelton Borough and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). Importance of stormwater management, level of service and stormwater needs were all considered. In addition, a list of known problems, scheduled stormwater improvements, and future projects necessary to comply with future regulatory requirements were used to project stormwater management expenses over the next 5 to 10 years. These overall stormwater system costs will be divided by the impervious area in the Borough to come up with the Stormwater Utility Fee.

How much is the Stormwater Utility Fee?

All residents with impervious surfaces on their property will pay a fee. The amount will differ depending on how much impervious area is on a property. The fee structure is shown below.

	Impervious Area	Monthly Fee
Tier 0	<300 sf	No Fee Assessed
Tier 1	300 – 1,999 sf	\$8.10
Tier 2	2,000 – 3,999 sf	\$17.00
Tier 3	4,000 – 5,999 sf	\$30.10
Tier 4	6,000+ sf	\$6.40 per 1,000 sf of Impervious Area, rounded to the nearest 100 sf

Where does the money collected from the Stormwater Utility Fee go?

All stormwater revenue will be placed into a dedicated fund used only for Steelton Borough's stormwater program, such as the operation, maintenance, and improvement of stormwater infrastructure. The funds will cover costs associated with the following:

- Operation and Maintenance of Stormwater Infrastructure – Roughly 12 linear miles of stormwater pipes, 600 inlets, and additional related infrastructure. Enhanced maintenance of these facilities is necessary to reduce flooding, improve public safety and extend the useful life of the asset.
- Regulatory Compliance – The Borough is required by state and federal regulations to reduce stormwater pollution and improve water quality for local streams.
- Capital Improvement Projects – Flood mitigation projects are being planned in various locations throughout the Borough.

Does everyone in the Borough pay the fee, including non-profits?

The fee will be paid by all property owners who own developed property in the Borough, whose property has impervious surfaces (roofs, driveways, sidewalks, walkways, roads, parking lots, etc.). Non-profits will pay because it is a fee and not a property tax. Property taxes are based on the assessed value of the property and the stormwater utility fee is based on how much a property contributes to stormwater runoff. Tax-exempt properties are required to pay for other utility charges including electric, water and sewer and the stormwater utility fee is no different.

How is this different from a tax?

All developed properties contribute stormwater runoff and should pay the stormwater fee; however, some properties are exempt from taxes. Unlike taxes, which are used for general services that the Borough provides, the revenue from the stormwater fee can only be used for stormwater management and cannot be redirected for other uses.

Why not just include the stormwater program costs in our property taxes?

The stormwater fee is based on the amount of impervious surface rather than assessed value, so the cost is shifted to the properties that create more stormwater runoff. There is no correlation between assessed values and the amount of impervious surface on a given property. This makes it unfair to base the stormwater fee on the assessed value of the properties. An advantage of a fee-based system is that we can offer credits to property owners who reduce the quantity of stormwater or improve the quality of stormwater leaving their property. Steelton Borough has developed a credit policy to provide reductions to property owners who make improvements which assist in meeting the Federal/State requirements. We cannot give such a credit on a tax-based system.

Can I appeal how much I'm being charged?

If you believe you are being charged for an incorrect amount of Impervious Area, you may submit an appeal to have this information be reviewed. The Steelton Borough Stormwater Authority Credit and Appeals Manual provides information on how to submit an appeal. Further information and applications can be found on the Borough's website.

Is there a way to reduce my fee?

Yes. Steelton Borough's stormwater utility fee will allow for credits. Credits are a monthly percent reduction in the stormwater utility fee for having and maintaining infrastructure which reduces the quantity of stormwater or improves the quality of stormwater leaving a property. The Steelton Borough Stormwater Authority Credit and Appeals Manual provides further information. The credits include:

- Structural BMP – BMPs that result in Rate/Volume Reductions and/or Water Quality improvements
- NPDES Credit – Credit for properties that hold active individual NPDES permits
- Stormwater Partnership Credit – Opportunity for cooperation via additional credit opportunities

How are impervious surfaces determined?

Aerial photographs of the entire Borough were taken. These photos were then geometrically corrected for the use in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software. In GIS, the impervious area features were identified and plotted throughout the Borough. This information can then be utilized to determine the amount of impervious area located on each property.

There are no storm sewers on or near my property. Why should I pay a fee?

All properties produce stormwater runoff that contribute to pollution and flooding downstream. Even if your property has never flooded and/or there are no nearby storm sewers, the stormwater that flows off your property must be managed by Steelton Borough. Stormwater management is a community-wide service that benefits the whole Borough, and the program costs need to be distributed to all residents. All property owners benefit from the management of stormwater along public streets which they travel. The fee will also help cover other services provided by the Borough, such as stormwater

system maintenance and permit compliance. Since there are additional services provided by the Borough, property owners who manage the majority of stormwater onsite will still pay a fee to help cover the additional services provided by the Borough beyond their property lines.

How will properties be billed?

A new stormwater line item will be included on your current Sanitary bill were applicable. For properties that are not currently receiving a sanitary bill, a new bill will be issued. Bills will be issued quarterly.

How is unoccupied property treated?

If the unoccupied property contains impervious area (vacant residential structures, empty commercial/industrial buildings, driveway, etc.), it will be charged. These properties continue to generate stormwater runoff just the same as an occupied property.

How is undeveloped property treated?

Undeveloped property is property that has not been altered by improvements such as buildings, parking lots, structures, or the addition of any other impervious areas. Since there are no impervious areas on these properties, undeveloped properties will not be charged a stormwater fee. Similarly, properties with under 300 square feet (sf) of impervious area will be treated as undeveloped properties.

Doesn't the Borough already have a stormwater system in place? Nothing has changed on my property, so why will I be charged now?

Portions of the Borough have had a stormwater system in place for many years; however, there are many areas of the Borough that do not have the appropriate infrastructure to handle the rainfall events we are seeing today. In recent years, there has also been an increased emphasis on stormwater management. New and revised state and federal regulations require a comprehensive stormwater management program. The stormwater utility fee ensures that Steelton Borough receives adequate financial support to meet its responsibilities to manage the stormwater system more closely, identify and eliminate illegal discharges, provide public education, and other regulatory requirements. The fee will also be used to cover the cost for increased inspection and maintenance of aging infrastructure, implementation of flood reduction projects, and the ability to rehabilitate/replace infrastructure that's reached the end of its useful life.

Why should I pay for rain falling on my property?

Property owners are not being charged for rain falling on the surface. Instead, the charges apply to runoff that's discharged into the stormwater system when it rains. As rain falls on impervious surface, it collects pollutants. The amount of pollutants contained in stormwater can be correlated to the amount of impervious surface on your property. Additionally, proper stormwater management is vital to ensuring flood risk is minimized. Through the implementation of the fee, a dedicated funding source will be in place to help manage stormwater in flood prone areas.