



# URBANDALE STORMWATER QUALITY

Stormwater is rain or snow melt that enters our storm drain system, ditches, and streams. Stormwater runoff collects garbage, debris, automotive fluids, chemicals, and other pollutants from roofs, ground, and pavement, and thus can pose a risk to our lakes, streams, rivers, and groundwater.

The City of Urbandale's Stormwater Utility Program provides for capital improvement projects, including:

- Construction of storm sewer.
- Maintenance and improvement of City creeks and drainage channels.
- Pollution prevention programs.

To help fund this program, all owners of developed land in the City pay a storm water utility fee. Since 2016, the monthly rate has been \$6.00 per ERU for the first 100 ERUs, and \$5.00 per ERU over 100.

**As of July 1, 2023, the Stormwater Fee will be \$7.00 per ERU, per month, for the first 100 ERUs. Each ERU over 100 will be \$6.00 per month. A single-family home is charged 1 ERU.**

Please continue reading for more information on stormwater in our City!

## Why is it important to address stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is a major problem when it is not clean. Polluted runoff can cause the loss of fish and aquatic wildlife from our community's streams and creeks. Stormwater runoff picks up garbage, debris, sediment, chemicals, automotive fluids, fertilizers, leaves, and other pollutants from parking lots, yards, streets, shopping malls, house roofs, etc. This type of pollution is called non-point source (NPS) pollution and is a greater problem than direct discharges from commercial industries and plants. Just as direct discharges are regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the City must comply with the State and Federal regulations related to Stormwater runoff.

## How is the City of Urbandale addressing stormwater?

In addition to maintaining the public storm sewer system and drainage channels, the City has implemented a stormwater program that includes:

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Involvement
3. Illicit Discharge Elimination
4. Construction Site Stormwater Runoff and Control
5. Post-construction Stormwater Management
6. Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping

## Who pays the fees?

All owners of developed land in the City of Urbandale pay the stormwater fee. This includes residential properties, commercial properties, industrial properties, churches, schools, and other non-profit organizations. Undeveloped land is not charged because it does not have impervious surfaces.

## How stormwater utility fees are calculated?

The charge for stormwater fees is based on the total impervious surface area on the property. An ERU (equivalent residential unit) is a measure of impervious surface on a property. The City of Urbandale has established one ERU as 3,200 square feet (sf) of impervious surface.

**All single family dwelling properties are charged a fee of one ERU.** Duplex dwellings with two family dwelling units are treated as two single family dwellings. Townhome dwellings that are not attached vertically are treated as a single family dwelling. Apartments are treated as commercial properties.

Commercial and industrial properties with greater than one ERU of impervious surface are charged for the total ERUs (the total impervious surface area divided by 3,200 sf). For example: a commercial property with 8,000 sf of total impervious surface would be billed for 2.5 ERUs.

## How do impervious surfaces affect stormwater runoff?

An impervious surface is any area that does not readily absorb water (pavement, buildings, gravel, etc.) Water that does not infiltrate runs off these surfaces, and stormwater facilities must be designed, constructed, and maintained to manage this flow. If not addressed, this stormwater runoff can cause flooding and pollution of the receiving waters. The amount of impervious surface on a property is a good gauge of how much that property is contributing to the overall need for stormwater facilities in our community.

## How is a stormwater fee different from a tax?

The stormwater fee is a user fee, much like the fee that you pay for your water utility or sanitary sewer utility services. Users of these services are charged for the demand they place on the system. This user fee system is a fair and equitable way to raise revenue for the program, since it charges those who directly contribute to its need. Existing water utility fees do not pay for stormwater facilities.

## Do other cities have stormwater fees?

Yes. Communities in central Iowa with a similar fee include Ames, Ankeny, Clive, Des Moines, Grimes, Johnston, Waukee, Windsor Heights, and West Des Moines.

## How do I pay my stormwater fee?

Stormwater fees are included with City water and garbage fees in the monthly bill from the Urbandale Water Utility.

## What can I do to protect stormwater quality?

The best way to protect stormwater runoff quality is to avoid polluting in the first place. Follow these tips:

- Don't dump hazardous substances (used oil, household chemicals, yard fertilizer, etc.) on pavement or into storm drains. Properly recycle hazardous waste.
- Pick up litter and dispose of leaves and yard waste properly.
- Prevent excess runoff of pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides by using them properly and efficiently.
- Participate in local garbage and debris pickup days.
- Encourage others to participate in stormwater protection and education.

## Stormwater Grant Program

The City of Urbandale offers a Grant Program for improvements to residential and commercial properties. The Grant Program reimburses property owners for 50% of eligible, pre-approved projects, up to \$10,000 for individuals and \$30,000 for HOAs and commercial sites. Please visit our website or contact our office for more information!

## To report a stormwater violation or get more information

Please contact the City of Urbandale Engineering and Public Works Department, or use the SeeClickFix portal to make a request.

3600 86<sup>th</sup> Street  
(515)-278-3950

[stormwater@urbandale.org](mailto:stormwater@urbandale.org)  
<https://seeclickfix.com/urbandale/report>  
[www.urbandale.org/805/Utility-Fees](http://www.urbandale.org/805/Utility-Fees)  
[www.urbandale.org/563/Stormwater-Grant-Program](http://www.urbandale.org/563/Stormwater-Grant-Program)

## Additional Resources

Polk County SWCD  
<http://www.polk-swcd.org/>

Iowa Stormwater Education Partnership  
<https://iowastormwater.org/>

Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
<http://www.iowadnr.gov/InsideDNR/RegulatoryWater/StormWater.aspx>

Iowa Department of Agriculture – Urban Conservation Program  
<http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/FieldServices/urbanConservation.asp>

United States Department of Agriculture  
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/>

