

A Guide to the Drainage Charge Bill Adjustment

This guide describes how customers can either: (a) simplify their bill; or (b) request modifications to the data that the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department (DWSD) uses in computing their charge. DWSD tries to use the best data available to ensure that properties are accurately charged for drainage. However, DWSD recognizes that changes to a parcel can happen at anytime. For customers whose bills are inaccurate because of outdated or incorrect data, DWSD has a process for customers to seek an adjustment of the billing data. This guide describes the options available to make adjustments to information about your property that is used by DWSD to generate your drainage charge bill.

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Billing Simplification

The billing system is set up to generate a monthly bill for each parcel. For customers that own more than one parcel, even if the parcels are adjacent to one another, a bill will be received for each parcel owned. For customers that want to combine their parcels or those that own multiple sites across the City, DWSD offers several options for customers to simplify their bill.



Multi-Parcel Sites (Adjacent Property Grouping)

DWSD offers a billing option that allows customers to group parcels that are either adjacent or in close proximity to each other. Customers must be and remain current on their bill to participate. Failure to keep current on consolidated billings may result in liens on the parcels and removal from the consolidated billing option.

Customers interested in this option may enroll by filling out the Authorization and Consent for Consolidated Billing form. Forms are available on-line at: www.detroitmi.gov/drainage.

Multiple Sites by Same Owner (Non-Adjacent Property Grouping)

For customers that own multiple properties across the City, DWSD offers a billing option that allows customers to consolidate bills for the various properties owned. Customers must be and remain current on their bill in order to participate. Failure to keep current on consolidated billings may result in liens on the parcels and removal from the consolidated billing option. Customers interested in this option may enroll by filling out the Authorization and Consent for Consolidated Billing form. Forms are available on-line at: www.detroitmi.gov/drainage.

The form is titled 'Authorization and Consent for Consolidated Billing' and is from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department. It includes a table for listing parcels with columns for 'Item', 'Parcel ID', and 'Account Number'. Below the table, there are fields for the account holder's name, address, and a signature line. A section at the bottom provides contact information for DWSD Drainage and Green Credit Program.

Item	Parcel ID	Account Number
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Figure 1: Authorization and Consent for Consolidated Billing

Adjustments

DWSD will update drainage charge billing information when data is proven to be outdated or incorrect. All customers may apply for applicable adjustments to correct data used in billing. The account must be in the customer's name. A customer may file an application for one or more reasons regarding incorrect parcel information outlined in the following section. Please refer to the section on Adjustment Application Procedures for information on application procedures and for the necessary forms and back-up documentation requirements.

Ownership Adjustments

- ◆ If a customer is billed for a parcel that they do not own, the incorrect parcel information is typically due to: 1) an incorrect mailing address; 2) the account is not associated with the correct parcel; or 3) the property has been sold (and the deed has not yet been properly recorded at the Assessor's Office), or the most recent assessor data has not been merged into the DWSD billing system.

- Parcel size or parcel configuration inaccuracies may be due to recent parcel splits, purchase or sale of a portion of a parcel, or consolidations, or otherwise inaccurate parcel boundary delineations. Since adjustments of this nature may affect the legal description of the property, the customer will be referred to the Assessor's office.

Geographic Information System Polygon Orientation Correction

The geographic information system (GIS) is the data management system that contains the parcel shape and is used to determine the impervious acreage of a parcel. A customer may apply for an adjustment if the GIS parcel polygon is not aligned correctly with the physical parcel and this discrepancy results in a change in the impervious area calculation for the site.

Did You Know?

435 square feet (.01 acres) is approximately equal to a two-car garage

A property survey provided by the owner and confirmed by DWSD can result in a more precise calculation of the impervious area.



NOTE: Impervious area adjustments of **435 square feet** or less will not be made to a parcel because the calculations used in determining impervious areas already provides an allowance of this amount of area. Impervious area measures are truncated to 0.01 of an acre in the data management system.

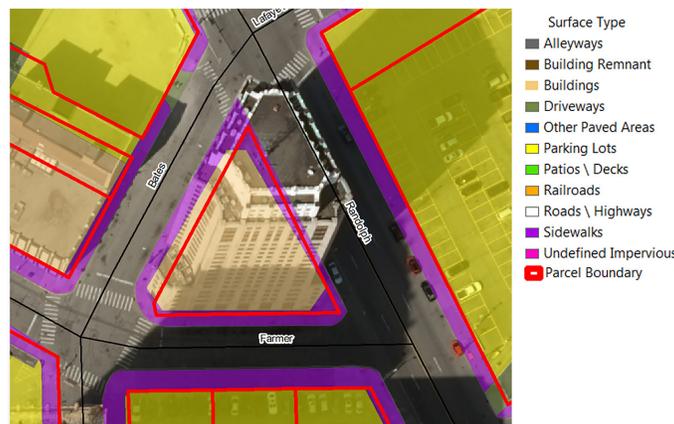


Figure 2: Parcel Boundary and Aerial Image

Impervious Cover Modification

The following sections are for applications related to outdated or incorrect impervious cover information.

Impervious Area Adjustments

A customer may apply for an adjustment if the parcel's total impervious area is outdated or incorrect. Impervious area adjustments may result from development or redevelopment projects. For example, the addition or removal of a building or structure.

The impervious area adjustment also applies to modifications made by the customer to their property to reduce the impervious area. An example of this situation is the removal of impervious surfaces such as parking lots replaced with landscaped/planted areas (pervious areas).



Impervious Classification

A customer may apply for an impervious area adjustment if the parcel or a portion of the parcel which is pervious, appears as an impervious area in the aerial photography. The customer needs to provide site photographs to confirm that areas classified as impervious meet the definition of pervious in order to reclassify the area as a pervious surface. DWSD may perform a site inspection to verify the property data.

NOTE: Customers may not apply for an adjustment to the drainage charge for any routinely driven on surface (e.g., gravel, dirt, and grass areas). Such surfaces impede the infiltration of water and are therefore deemed impervious.



Storm Water Discharged to Surface Waters

For some customers, a portion or all of their property discharges storm water directly to receiving waters (i.e., the Detroit and Rouge Rivers). If the criteria outlined below are met, the standard drainage charge calculation will be applied only to those portions of the property that drain to DWSD's sewer system. If all of the property discharges to a receiving water, there will be no drainage charge.

The following criteria must be met to be classified as a direct discharge:

1. The storm water discharge must flow through a privately owned and operated storm drainage system (rather than a DWSD storm sewer or outfall). This applies to the entire drainage conveyance system from the point storm water leaves the site to the point where it reaches and discharges to the receiving waters.
2. The property must be protected from the 100-year flood event (i.e., if a 100-year river elevation occurs, the site will not flood).

Note: This is not considered a drainage credit as storm water is not being managed on-site.

Property owners wishing to receive an adjustment for a property or portion of a property can apply for an adjustment using the Drainage Charge Adjustment Form. Forms are available on-line at: www.detroitmi.gov/drainage.

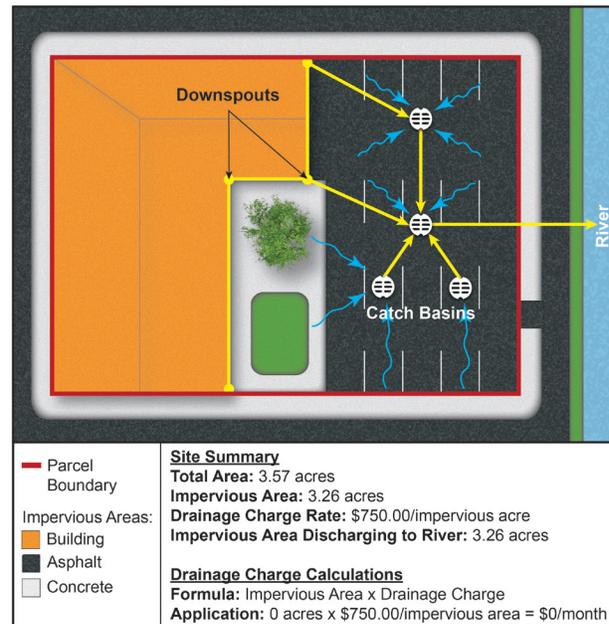


Figure 3: 100% Storm Water Discharge to Surface Water

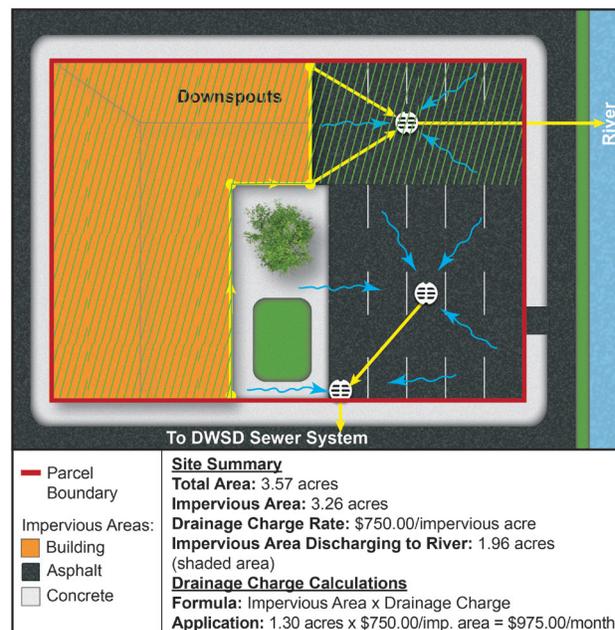


Figure 4: Partial Storm Water Discharge to Surface Water

GIS Polygon or Impervious Area or Impervious Classification Adjustments

For applications related to incorrect impervious area information, customers must provide adequate evidence supporting the requested impervious area square footage by providing the following:

- Drainage and Green Credit Program Impervious Cover Survey Form
- Site plan
- Site photographs
- Marked-up image showing correct parcel boundary and/or impervious coverage (this image could be taken from the Parcel Viewer)

If DWSD is unable to make a determination based on the information submitted, then DWSD may request a land survey prepared by a Registered Surveyor at the customer's expense.

Storm Water Discharge Directly to Surface Waters

For applications related to discharges directly to surface waters (the Detroit or Rouge Rivers) or retention of storm water on-site:

- Drawings and/or site plans. ***The drawings/site plans need to show the storm sewer system and the topography to define the portion of the property that drains to surface waters.***
- Site photographs
- The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) storm water permit (if a non-residential customer).

Note: There may be a one-time fee to review the drawings/site plans.

Figure 7: Drainage and Green Credit Program Impervious Cover Survey Form



If DWSD is unable to make a determination based on the information submitted, then DWSD may request a land survey prepared by a Registered Surveyor at the customer's expense.

Application Forms

The Drainage Charge Adjustments Application, and the Drainage and Green Credit Program Impervious Cover Survey Form, are available online at: www.detroitmi.gov/drainage.

New accounts will be required to fill out the DWSD Water and Sewer Application for Service Form.

Application Submission

The completed application and the supporting documentation must be submitted to:

DWSD Drainage and Green Credit Program
735 Randolph Street, Room 806
Detroit, MI 48226

Alternatively, applications can be faxed to 313.964.9110 or emailed to: drainage@detroitmi.gov.

Customers with additional questions should call: 313.267.8000.

Adjustments to the legal description of a property must be made in person at the Assessor's office located in the Coleman A. Young Building, 2 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI 48226. Questions regarding adjustments to a parcel or a property's legal description should call: 313.224.3011.

Adjustment Application Denials

If the customer disagrees with DWSD's adjustment decision, he or she may request that the application be re-evaluated. Customers wishing to have their adjustment decision re-evaluated should contact the DWSD Drainage and Green Credit Program at drainage@detroitmi.gov or 313.267.8000 to initiate a formal appeal process.

For those customers that want to meet in person (not necessary), DWSD will see customers by appointment only. Please call 313.267.8000 to schedule an appointment.

Drainage Charge Adjustment Policies

Property Owner Responsibilities

DWSD is funding regular aerial photography flyovers and working with the Assessor's Office to update property ownership data. DWSD's customers are responsible to provide data that demonstrates that the drainage charge is not accurate. Customers are responsible for the cost incurred in the preparation of any necessary supporting data or required documentation.

Amounts not in question are due to be paid in full regardless of the submittal/pending status of an adjustment application. If DWSD approves an application then the account will be credited from the date the application was submitted and deemed administratively complete (i.e., all forms and requirement documentation provided).

Figure 8: Water and Sewer Application for Service for New Accounts Receiving Water and Sewerage Services



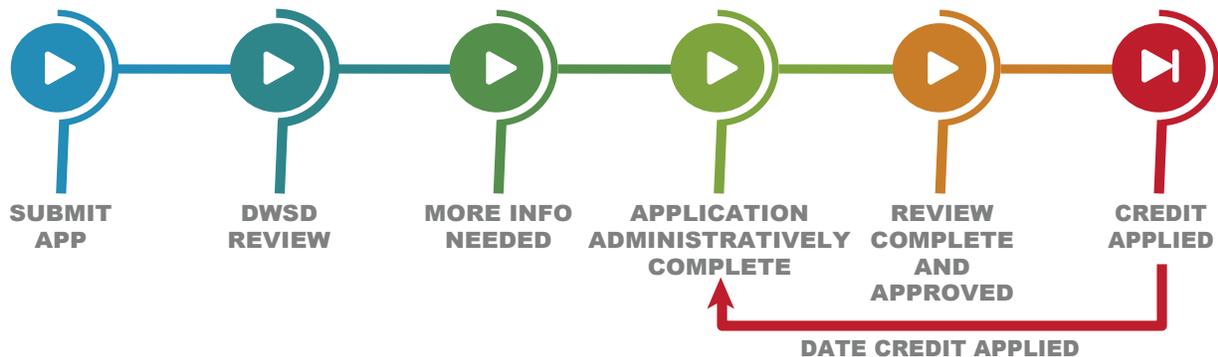
If the customer is notified that an application is incomplete, they have 10 business days to provide the requested information or to contact DWSD. If the application is not administratively complete 10 business days after notification, or if DWSD has not been contacted by the customer, the application will be dismissed. The customer may open a new application when they have the necessary information.

DWSD Responsibilities

It is DWSD's responsibility to review completed applications and notify the customer in a timely fashion of any missing information necessary to process the application and make a decision. DWSD will notify the customer in writing upon completing the technical review of the application. Applications are effective from the date the Adjustment Application form and backup documentation are accepted and administratively complete.

Adjustment Credit Date

Once approved, the effective date of the bill adjustment will be the date the application was submitted to DWSD and administratively complete.

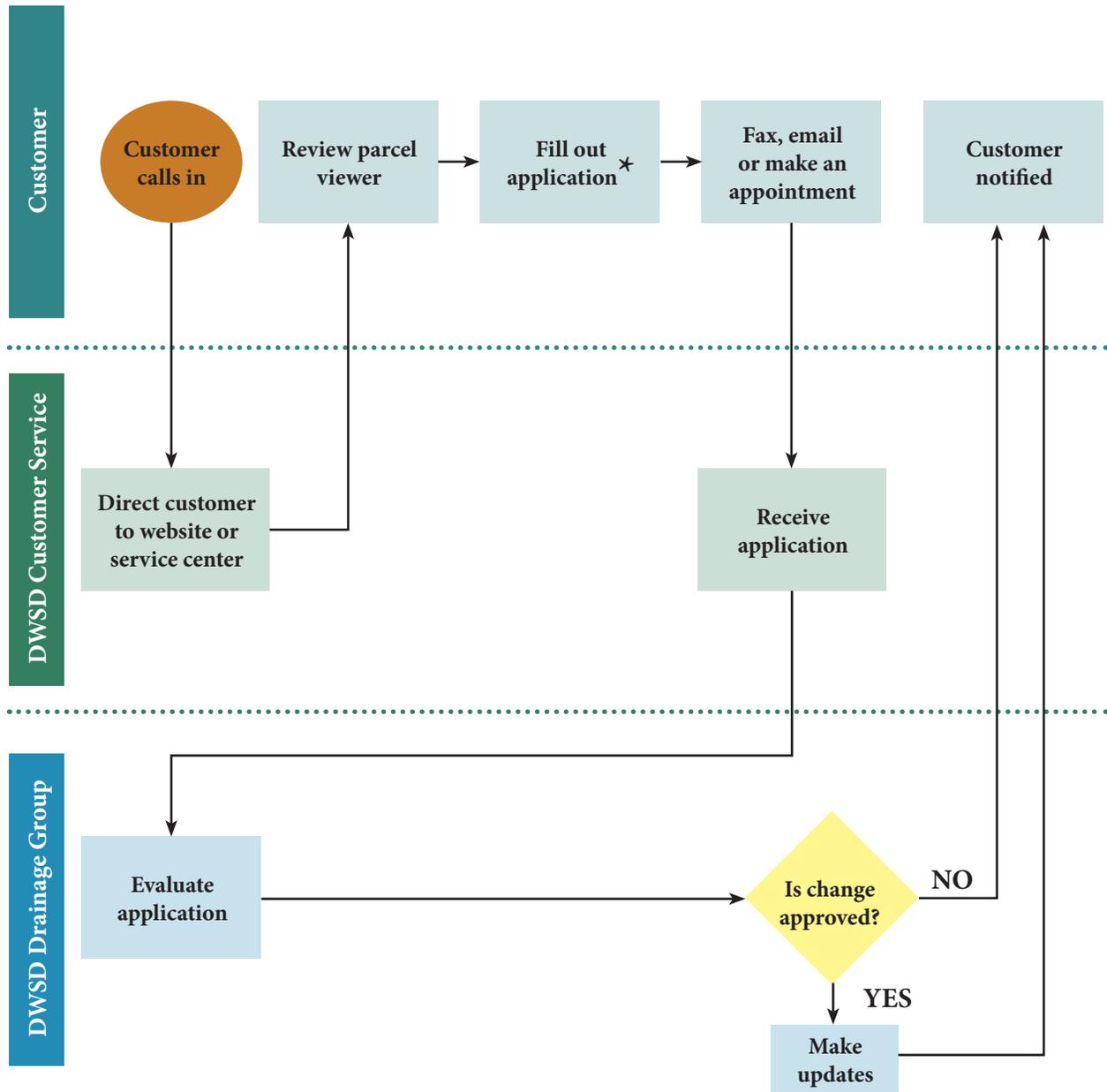


Data Validation

Following the submission of an application form, DWSD may need to inspect the subject parcel to verify the accuracy of the information provided in the application form. DWSD will provide 48 hours written notice to the customer of their intentions to inspect the property and request access to the parcel. Inspections will be conducted within normal business hours and without unreasonable disruption to business operations. Failure of an applicant to make appointments upon request will result in rejection of the adjustment application.



Drainage charge adjustments will be based on the information provided and may result in a drainage charge increase. DWSD may revoke the adjustment if they later determine that the information provided in the application is inaccurate.



*Customer must file within 28 days of receipt of monthly bill.

Figure 9: Customer Adjustment Process

