



# MARYLAND STORMWATER FEE REDUCTIONS

Baltimore City Customer Guidance Document:

## Single Family Property



## I. Overview

In 2012, the Maryland Legislature passed a law mandating that the 10 largest jurisdictions in the state, including Baltimore City, establish a Maryland stormwater fee. The fee will provide a sustainable, dedicated revenue source for maintaining, operating, and improving the City’s stormwater management system, with the ultimate goal of reducing flooding and erosion, and keeping our waterways cleaner.

The City’s stormwater fees are based on the amount of impervious area on a property. Impervious surfaces, like sidewalks and driveways, block water from infiltrating the ground. They cause increased runoff, overload the drainage system, and transport pollutants and nutrients to bodies of water. Maintaining the stormwater management system and reducing the nutrients and other pollutants are the primary expenses of the program.

This document is based on the “Rules and Regulations” for Stormwater Utility which is available on <http://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/>



### Impervious and Pervious Surfaces

Impervious surfaces do not allow water to infiltrate the ground and cause flooding and pollution in our waterways. Pervious surfaces allow water to penetrate the ground which prevents flooding and contamination of our waterways.

## II. Fee Calculation

Single family properties (SFPs) are charged one of three flat fees, based on the amount of impervious area on the property.

Tier 1		Tier 2		Tier 3	
					
Impervious Area	Monthly	Impervious Area	Monthly	Impervious Area	Monthly
≤820 square feet	<b>\$4.33</b>	>820 to ≤ 1500 square feet	<b>\$6.50</b>	>1500 square feet	<b>\$13.00</b>

*Customers who feel they have been placed in the wrong tier should contact the Customer Service and Support Division at (410)396-5398.*

## III. Credits Available

Single family property customers are able to reduce their fees through credits. A credit is a reduction in a stormwater service charge that is granted to a customer for measures that reduce demand upon the City’s drainage system or reduce the City’s cost of stormwater management.

The purpose of establishing a Maryland Stormwater Fee credit program is to provide a way for ratepayers to reduce their fees, and an incentive for them to implement stormwater management measures. A credit system aims to protect water quality, create equity in the payment system, reduce public expenditures on stormwater management, and promote private sector stormwater management. For details on senior and low income discounts and exemptions please visit <http://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/Water-Billing-Programs-to-Assist-Residents> or call the Customer Support and Services Division at (410) 396-5398.

The following chart is a quick guide to customers' eligibility for credits.

### Chart 1: Stormwater Fee Credit Overview

#### SINGLE FAMILY PROPERTY STOMWATER FEE CREDITS

##### Public Participation

**Description:** Customers can participate in a public project or event within the City like a **stream clean-up, tree planting, or de-paving**. Eligible events will be advertised on [cleanwaterbaltimore.org](http://cleanwaterbaltimore.org).

**Maximum Credit** – For every 4 hours of participation you can get a credit of \$10. The maximum credit is \$30/year.

##### Simple Residential Best Management Practices

**Description:** Customers can utilize **residential best management practices (BMPs)** by installing and maintaining rain gardens, trees, and rainwater harvesting systems to earn credits.

**Renewal** – 3 years



**Large Rain Garden** – Minimum size of 100 square feet with minimum drainage area of 1000 square feet.

**Maximum Credit**– \$16/year

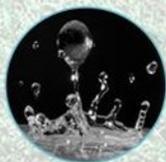
**Small Rain Garden** – Minimum size of 50 square feet with minimum drainage area of 500 square feet.

**Maximum Credit**– \$8/year



**Tree Planting** – The tree must be one inch or greater in diameter and installed after January 1, 2010. At least two trees must be planted to receive credit.

**Maximum Credit**– \$5/tree/year



**Rain Barrels** - Rain barrels collect and temporarily store rainwater from roofs for use to water gardens, lawns, and trees. A minimum 50 gallons of storage is required to be eligible for this credit.

**Maximum Credit**– \$25 / rain barrel; this is a one-time credit.

##### Other Residential Best Management Practices

Customers can utilize more sophisticated **best management practices (BMPs)** approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

**Maximum Credit** – 45% for 100% onsite treatment

**Renewal** – 3 years.

## A. Participation

Single family property customers are eligible for credit based on participation in a public project within the City specifically targeted at improving water quality, such as trash clean-up, tree planting, and de-paving. These activities provide direct water quality benefits and increase awareness.

Customers seeking participation credit should be aware of the following parameters.

- For every 4 hours, you can get a credit of \$10/year for a maximum of \$30 within a 12-month time frame.
  - Customers who exceed the \$30/year maximum can donate certificates to another person.
- Multiple residents of the same SFP may all receive participation credit towards their stormwater remediation fee, up to the 12-hour maximum.
- The credit for a customer's participation in an event may only be applied to one property.
- The credit is good for 12 months. Only events in which the organizers have received certification from the City are eligible for participation credits.

### Example 1: Participation Event Credits



*Photo courtesy of Mark Dennis.*

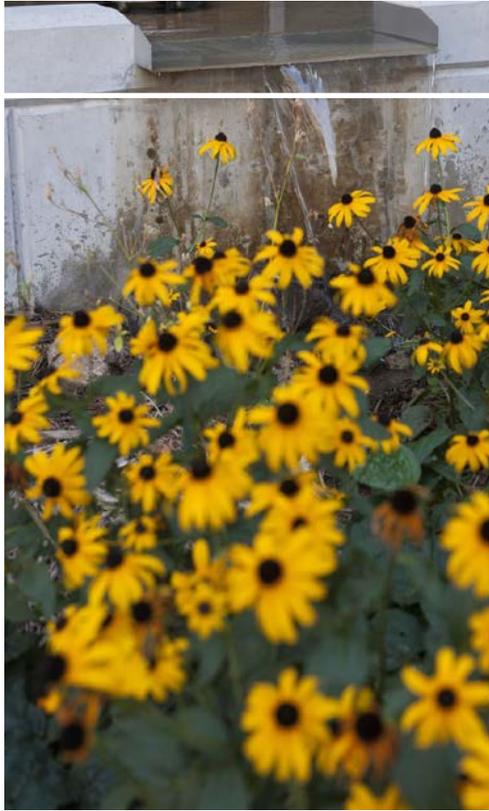
**A mother learns from their community association about a community clean-up. She and son spend four hours collecting litter as directed by the event organizer. When finished, having volunteered for a combined 8 hours, the mother takes the Stormwater Participation Event certificates provided by the organizer and submits a credit application to the City. Since every 4 hours of participation qualifies for \$10 in credit, they are eligible for a \$20 credit.**

**They like working outdoors and decide to participate in an organized tree planting event. Their next 8 hours of participation brings them to 16 hours. That's over the \$30 annual maximum for these credits, so they give one of their certificates to an elderly neighbor who can apply for a \$10 credit.**

**If you have any questions, contact the Customer Support and Services Division at 410-396-5398.**

Customers may receive credit for installing and maintaining stormwater treatment practices that limit nutrient loading and decrease the quantity of stormwater entering the City's drainage system. Single family property customers can take advantage of simple structural Best Management Practice options as well as more sophisticated structures.

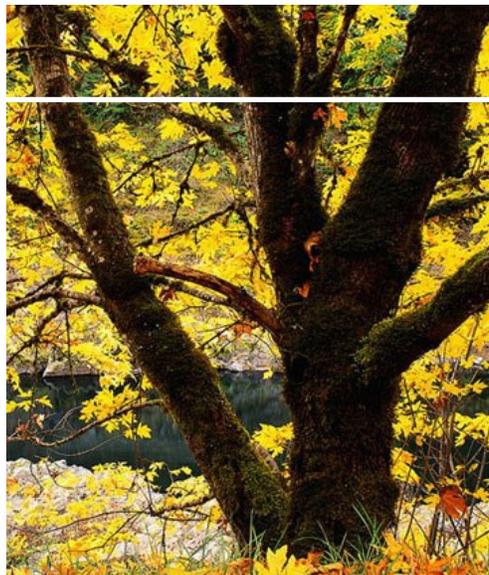
**These practices are eligible for stormwater fee credit:**



## Rain Garden

A rain garden is a depressed area of the ground planted with vegetation, allowing runoff from impervious surfaces such as parking lots and roofs the opportunity to be collected and infiltrated into the groundwater supply or evaporated. This credit is available in two categories:

- A small rain garden has a minimum size of 50 square feet with a minimum drainage area of 500 square feet. It is eligible for a credit of \$8 per year.
- A large rain garden must have a minimum size of 100 square feet and a minimum drainage area of 1,000 square feet. It is eligible for a credit of \$16 per year.



## Tree Planting

**Trees reduce stormwater runoff in addition to decreasing energy needs. Trees planted after 2010 are eligible for credit. The planted tree must be 1 inch or greater in diameter. Tree plantings must conform to City landscaping guidelines.**

A minimum of 2 trees must be planted to be eligible for this credit. Each tree planted is eligible for \$5 of credit per year.



## Rain Barrels

A rain barrel system collects and temporarily stores rainwater from roofs for use to water gardens, lawns, and trees. A minimum 50 gallons of storage is required to be eligible for this credit. The property owner must demonstrate that the rain barrel is properly installed and the water will be used to irrigate green space. One-time credit of \$25 / rain barrel.

**Each of these credits lasts for three years.** To be eligible for the simple residential Best Management Practice credit, the property owner or designated representative must execute a simple right-of-entry agreement with the Department. It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure that all treatment practices are properly maintained. Improper maintenance, as discovered by routine inspection, may be grounds for rescinding a credit.

For initial simple residential Best Management Practice credit application, photo documentation is required along with the completed application form. Renewal applications require photo documentation as well as other applicable maintenance documentation. Additional information and help is available through public and private agencies including:

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Blue Water Baltimore
- Center for Watershed Protection
- TreeBaltimore

### B. Other Residential Best Management Practices

Customers may also receive credit for installing and maintaining other, more sophisticated on-site Best Management Practices that limit nutrient loading and decrease the quantity of water entering the City's stormwater system. Each will be subject to an inspection via a simple Right of Entry agreement, and must meet the standards outlined in the [Maryland Stormwater Design Manual](#). In addition, technical review of the application by the City is required. The maximum credit is 45% of the stormwater fee for treatment of all of a parcel's impervious area.

## IV. Application Process

Customers are able to reduce their base fees through a number of legislated fee reductions and credits. All reductions must be applied for and are good for the renewal period.

## A. How to Apply

Applications and this guidance document are available at <http://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/stormwater-fee> and at the Abel Wolman Municipal Building, or by calling the Customer Support and Services Division at (410) 396-5398. Applications and supporting materials should be submitted to the Customer Support and Services Division at the addresses below.

Department of Public Works  
c/o Customer Support and Services Division  
200 Holliday Street  
Abel Wolman Municipal Building  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
or  
[publicworks@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:publicworks@baltimorecity.gov)

Include “STORMWATER CREDIT APPLICATION” in email subject line

Customers will receive a letter when their application materials have been received and are under review. After the review, another letter will follow with the application decision. At any time, customers may call the Department’s Customer Support and Services Division at (410) 396-5398.

**The customer is still obligated to pay the full fee during the credit application review.**

## B. Timing of Review

Credit applications are to be reviewed and decided on within 30 days of receipt of a complete application package. Participation, simple residential treatment practices, and other simple credits or fee reductions may be complete in a shorter time frame. When a 30 day review period would have allowed a property to receive credit or a fee reduction on a subsequent monthly bill and the Department is unable to complete the review within that period, the credit will be applied retroactively for any months that are billed after the 30 day review period.

## C. Appeals

If a customer applies for credit and it is denied after review, the customer may submit an appeal in writing within 30 days of receiving his decision letter. The appeal letter should be sent to the Customer Support and Services Division via the mailing address, email address, or fax number listed above. The letter must contain:

- The customer’s name;
- Account number;
- Basis of appeal; and
- Evidence to support the customer’s contention, such as:
  - Measurements from an approved as-built engineering drawing;
  - A land survey that shows the total parcel area and the impervious area; Proof of ownership or proof of sale; or
  - Other reliable documentation that proves the customer’s contention.

The Director of Public Works is the final authority for the Department on all appeals. If the customer is aggrieved by the Director’s final decision on an appeal, the customer may seek review by the Board of Municipal Zoning Appeals (BMZA) according to that entity’s appeals process. Finally, the customer may seek judicial review of that decision in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City.

## **D. Credit Renewal Process**

### **1. Notification**

Stormwater customers are responsible for maintaining an active credit status. If the renewal application is not received within 30 days before the end of the credit period, the credit may not be reflected on the subsequent water bill.

### **2. How to Renew**

For each credit or fee reduction type, the application for renewals is the same form as the initial application. Please include the original documentation as well as documentation describing maintenance where applicable.

### **3. Timing of Renewal**

No credit will be provided in perpetuity. Approval periods are established for each credit type to encourage maintenance of the practice and verify that the practice provides the intended water quality treatment. Approval periods are listed in Chart 1 (above) for each of the credit types. Credit may be rescinded within the approval period based on Department inspection. The Department will notify the customer by mail of any decisions to rescind the credit within the approval period.

## **E. Transference of Credit**

Once credits or fee reductions are established, they become a characteristic of the property, rather than the customer. If a property changes ownership in the middle of its approval period, the new owner will inherit the active credit status, receive a discounted bill for the remainder of the approval period, and receive a notification letter about credit renewal. Credits will not be transferred with the customer (including Participation credits).

## **F. Application**

Refer to this guidance document for information on the required documents that should be submitted with your application. Please retain the following Single Family Property Credit Application for future use.





**MARYLAND STORMWATER FEE CREDIT**  
**SINGLE FAMILY PROPERTY CREDIT APPLICATION**

**CUSTOMER NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First

**PROPERTY ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Optional)

**MAILING ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
If different from property address

**PARCEL ID (BLOCK/LOT):** \_\_\_\_\_ **APPLICATION DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Optional)

(Visit <http://cityservices.baltimorecity.gov/realproperty/> to search your Block/Lot)

**ACCOUNT No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

This application is for the renewal of credits.

Credit Type	Brief Description of Events or BMP	Fee Reduction <small>* For official use only</small>
<i>Participation (\$10/4hrs/year)</i>		
<i>Tree Planting (\$5/year)</i>		
<i>Rain Barrels (\$25 / 50 gallons or larger) *</i>		
<i>Small Rain Garden (\$8/year)</i>		
<i>Large Rain Garden (\$16/year)</i>		
<i>Other BMP Types (Up to 45%)</i>		
<small>* One-time credit</small>		<b>Total Approved Reduction:</b> \$

To my knowledge, all the information included in the application is correct.

\* For official use only

Customer Service Rep: _____	Date Approved: _____
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**BALTIMORE CITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

**MARYLAND STORMWATER FEE CREDIT**

**SINGLE FAMILY PROPERTY CREDIT APPLICATION (CONTINUED)**

**DIRECTIONS:** Refer to the *Single Family Property Maryland Stormwater Fee Reductions Customer Guidance Document* for instructions and additional information.

Please send this completed application and required attachments to:

**Bureau of Water and Wastewater**

**Abel Wolman Municipal Building**

**200 Holliday Street, Room 404**

**Attn: Customer Support and Services Division**

**Baltimore, MD 21202**

or

**Email [publicworks@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:publicworks@baltimorecity.gov)**

**Include in subject line [STORMWATER CREDIT APPLICATION](#)**

Please note enclosed documentation as applicable:

- Photo of BMP
- Sketch showing the location of BMP in relation to lot lines, house and other impervious area such as sidewalks or driveways
- Executed right-of-entry agreement
- Maintenance documentation (for renewal application)
- Certificate(s) of event participation
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**THE CUSTOMER IS STILL OBLIGATED TO PAY THE FULL FEE DURING THE CREDIT APPLICATION REVIEW**