

CURRENTS

Understanding the New Stormwater Fee

Find Ratepayer Resources at www.pgh2o.com/stormwater-fee



Permeable pavers installed at Kentucky Ave. in Shadyside

Your PGH2O bill will look a little different – it will now include a line item for stormwater services. Our new bill explainer illustrates what to expect.

Historically, stormwater services were funded through wastewater rates, which are based on water usage. This meant that those using more wastewater services paid more towards stormwater services.

The new stormwater fee, which went into effect on January 12, 2022, is calculated based on the hard or impervious surfaces on a property like roofs, driveways, and parking lots. This ensures that all property owners in Pittsburgh contribute

a share that is proportional to the amount of runoff generated by their property. This is a more equitable way to distribute these costs, and customers may notice their wastewater rates go down accordingly.

How much is the stormwater fee?

Calculating the stormwater fee meant that we needed to understand the amount of hard surface on each property in Pittsburgh. Using aerial photography, we mapped the entire city and determined that the average amount of impervious surface on a single-family residential property is approximately 1,650 square feet. This is equal to one

equivalent residential unit (ERU) of impervious surface and is accepted as the industry standard unit of measure. The new stormwater fee is applied to all residential and non-residential properties in Pittsburgh with the rate table below.

Can I reduce my stormwater fee?

Income qualified customers enrolled in the Bill Discount Program will receive an 85% discount on the stormwater fee. This is in addition to the other benefits available through the Bill Discount Program. More information about this and other customer assistance programs is available at www.pgh2o.com/cap.

Additionally, we have established a credit program for customers who choose to manage stormwater on their properties by installing a stormwater system such as

a rain garden or underground storage. Residential and non-residential customers can earn stormwater credit by meeting certain requirements and maintaining their stormwater systems. The Credit Manual and Application are available at www.pgh2o.com/stormwater-fee.

Customers can also replace paved surfaces with a garden or vegetated area. Reducing hard surfaces could lead to an overall fee reduction.

Is more information available?

Visit our website at www.pgh2o.com/stormwater-fee for more information. It is your one stop shop for all things pertaining to the new stormwater charge - including our searchable Fee Finder Website. If you have questions, please email info@pgh2o.com.

Stormwater Monthly Fees (Based on Impervious Surface)	ERUs	2022	2023
Residential Tier 1 (≥400 to <1,015 sf)	.5	\$2.98	\$3.98
Residential Tier 2 (≥1,015 to <2,710 sf)	1	\$5.96	\$7.95
Residential Tier 3 (≥2,710 sf)	2	\$11.92	\$15.90
Non-Residential	Per ERU	\$5.96	\$7.95

70% of all Pittsburgh homeowners fall into Residential Tier 2.



Pittsburgh
Water & Sewer
Authority

For a complete list of PWSA's board and community meetings, please visit pgh2o.com/events-meetings. Following COVID-19 restrictions, meetings are held virtually and may be tentative or postponed.

PWSA Participates in Annual Cool Down for Warmth Fundraiser Plus, PWSA Employees Raise More Than \$4,200 for Hardship Grant Program



Many of our neighbors in need are struggling to afford the cost of basic water and wastewater services. To help, PWSA participated in Dollar Energy Fund's 8th annual **Cool Down for Warmth** campaign, a unique and exciting fundraising event to benefit families in need across Pittsburgh. This year, Dollar Energy Fund and their partners raised more

than \$140,000! Thank you to everyone who participated.

Contributions to the Hardship Grant Program, an assistance program administered by Dollar Energy Fund, will be distributed as financial aid to eligible households in need of assistance with their utility bills.

Since 2018, our Hardship Grant Program has helped more than 630 Pittsburgh households maintain essential water services by providing income-eligible customers with annual cash assistance to put towards their monthly water bill. We have distributed more than

\$165,000 through the program and awarded an average household grant of \$263. In 2021 alone, PWSA employees came together as part of our annual Hardship Grant Program donation drive, raising more than \$4,200!

The money raised from this event will provide cash grants up to \$300 per year for customers who are at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (www.pgh2o.com/CAP).

Though the event is over, donations are still coming in! Those who wish to help local families in need may continue

to donate online at www.dollarenergy.org/donate. Thank you to everyone for their support!



TEAM PGH2O

Employee Spotlight: Rick Obermeier

Rick Obermeier, Chief of Operations, Technical Support, to Retire



For 40 years, Rick Obermeier has been a staple at the Authority. Hired in 1982 as a plumber, Rick eventually rose through the PWSA ranks, taking on roles of increasing responsibility, including Service Foreman, Director of Sewer

Operations, and Director of Field Operations. And that's just to name a few!

To note just a few achievements, Rick contributed to two small meter change out programs, a large meter change out program, and our Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) metering system.

Rick is adamant that his success is not only his own. It's shared among PWSA's dedicated operations employees, who are integral in ensuring we provide 24/7 water, sewer and stormwater services. As someone closely familiar with

the nature of field operations, Rick built great rapport with his teams. His way of working and leading was simple: don't ask an employee to do something you wouldn't do yourself.

When asked what he hopes people will remember about his time at PWSA, Rick has a simple answer: that he helped. This extends to his team of field employees, who he hopes he helped support in their careers.

As he leaves PWSA, Rick is confident our organization is heading in the right direction. One of the most significant changes he's been proud of

is our continuing transition to regulation by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, which he believes adds a needed level of accountability and standardization.

Rick recently moved from Bloomfield to Butler, Pa. In retirement, Rick hopes to spend time with his family, work around the house and visit his cabin.

Before Rick leaves, he'd like to wish every Operations employee who is retiring a happy retirement! Same to you, Rick! You'll certainly be missed.

Water Main & Lead Service Line Replacement Project Update



Crews install new water main on Forbes Avenue in The Bluff

The following annual water main and lead service line replacement efforts will

continue in 2022. Please read below for more information on these programs:

- **Small Diameter Water Main Replacement** – This PENNVEST-funded project will improve water reliability and safety by replacing approximately 8 miles of new water main and 900 service lines.
- **2022 Neighborhood Lead Service Line Replacement** – The City of Pittsburgh approved and provided \$17.5 million to PWSA from the American Rescue Plan to remove over 700 lead lines.

- **2022 Priority Lead Service Line Replacement** – This program will identify and replace lead lines at daycare facilities and locations with elevated lead samples. This work is made possible by a \$4.7 million funding package from PENNVEST.

Learn more about our projects by visiting www.pgh2o.com/projects-maintenance.



Snow and ice aren't just slipping hazards – they can also cause issues as they melt and become stormwater. When soil freezes in the ground during cold winter temperatures, it loses some of its sponge-like abilities to soak up stormwater. That means melting snow and ice have fewer places to go, which can lead to more flooding. In addition, melting snow and ice can carry environmentally harmful chemicals from de-icing salts to our rivers and streams, hurting water quality and wildlife. Try these tips to help reduce flooding and pollution:

- Clear out snow surrounding your downspouts. This will allow melting snow from your roof to flow instead of collecting at your foundation, which can help prevent basement flooding.
- Do not pile snow on top of storm drains. Clear off any blocked storm drains near your property.
- Pile snow where it is most likely to be absorbed by the ground when it melts. Chose areas that are relatively flat or do not typically pond during rainstorms.
- Do not over-apply de-icing salt or sand. Shovel or plow before salting.
- Use less-toxic ice removal methods. Try mixing beet juice with de-icing salt to reduce salt use and lower the freezing point.

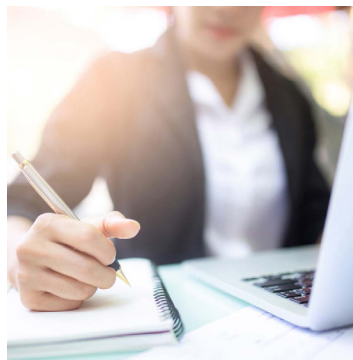
PWSA's New Permitting Fees Support Neighborhood Economic

As part of the new rate structure, effective January 12, and our continuing transition to regulation by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) introduced changes to residential and commercial permitting fees to simplify and standardize water, sewer, and stormwater costs. The changes come after a comprehensive 2021 fee study that evaluated the labor and material costs associated with our permitting functions and best practices across the industry.

The 2022 fee changes include eliminating tapping

fees (EDU fees), establishing new application fees, and reducing operation fees. The elimination of tapping fees aims to incentivize affordable housing and small business development by lowering the initial cost of water and sewer connections and achieving a more predictable outcome.

Along with the fee changes, we have launched the second phase of our online permitting portal to include development permits and waterline shuts. CityGrows offers enhancements to the permitting process, including a 24/7 user dashboard, email notifications, a chat feature, and payment by



credit card. To access the new permitting portal, please visit <https://go.citygrows.com/pwsa>.

Through these initiatives, we hope to improve the services provided to our customers, reduce permitting application review times, and continue to enhance our business relations with current and prospective developers.

Customer Assistance Programs

Our Customer Assistance Programs are designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their water and wastewater bill. These programs are managed by our **PGH2O Cares team**, a group of education and outreach professionals dedicated to working directly with our most vulnerable customers to bolster enrollment in our customer assistance programs and identify ways to reduce water usage.



For more information about our programs, including the **Winter Shut Off Moratorium**, **Bill Discount**, **Flexible Payment Plans**, **Hardship Grant**, and **Lead Line Reimbursements**, please visit Pgh2o.com/CAP or call Dollar Energy Fund at **866.762.2348**.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Donate to the **Hardship Grant Program** online at Pgh2o.com/give.

Enroll in eBilling

Convenient and easy to use, our online billing and payment portal ensures timely delivery of bills and payments.

New enrollees who also enroll in the autopay feature will receive a one-time \$5.00 discount on their bill. Visit Pgh2o.com/ebilling to enroll.

Do We Have Your Number?

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages?

It is important to verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO:

Call PWSA Customer Service:
412.255.2423 (Press 5)

Visit our website:
Pgh2o.com/update-contact-info

Track Water Usage!

Monitor your water use in real-time and set customized, automated usage alerts. You can even authorize multiple users, such as tenants, to receive usage alerts. Setting usage alerts can help detect costly water leaks in your property. To sign up:

- Visit PGH2O.com and click on **Pay a Bill**
- Select "Check Usage"
- Enter your email address, and click the link provided in an email that you will receive from the portal.
- Type your full 14-digit account number and meter serial number.
- Add your cell phone number to receive important alerts via text message and create a password.
- Use your email address and password to log in.
- Tour the portal, and set usage thresholds for email and/or text alerts.

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Join our email list to make sure you're getting the latest news and updates. Signing up is simple at pgh2o.com/subscribe or view online at pgh2o.com/newsletters.

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- nextdoor.com

Penn Liberty Plaza 1
1200 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Customer Service
T 412.255.2423 (Press 5)
info@pgh2o.com

Emergency Dispatch
T 412.255.2423 (Press 1)
Available 24/7

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