



Stormwater Utility Fee Frequently Asked Questions



Q. Why are we implementing a stormwater utility fee?

A. Federal and state regulations require the City of Lebanon to address the quality of stormwater runoff and the pollution carried by the water that is deposited untreated into our creeks, streams, and rivers. Stormwater quality management programs are responses to regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) connected to the Clean Water Act.

Q. What is stormwater runoff?

A. Stormwater runoff is the water that flows off roofs, driveways, parking lots, streets and other hard surfaces during rain storms. Stormwater runoff is also the rain that flows off grass surfaces and wooded areas that is not absorbed into the soil. The runoff that is not absorbed into the ground pours into ditches, culverts, catch basins and storm sewers. It does not receive any treatment before entering the streams and lakes.

Q. What is stormwater pollution?

A. Water from rain or melting snow either seeps into the ground or “runs off” to lower areas, making its way into streams, lakes, and other water bodies. On its way, runoff water can pick up and carry many substances that pollute water. Examples of common pollutants include fertilizers, pesticides, pet wastes, sediments, oils, salts, trace metals, grass clippings, leaves and litter. Stormwater polluted runoff can be generated anywhere people use or alter the land, such as farms, yards, roofs, driveways, construction sites, and roadways.

Q. Why is stormwater runoff a problem?

A. As precipitation falls on agricultural and undeveloped areas, it is primarily absorbed into the ground or slowly runs off into streams, rivers or other water bodies. However, development resulting in rooftops and paved areas prevent water from being absorbed and create a faster rate of runoff. This development often causes water quality and water quantity issues. In addition, stormwater can carry harmful pollutants, can erode topsoil and stream banks, destroy habitats, and cause flooding.

Q. Why do we need to manage our stormwater runoff?

A. Stormwater runoff needs to be managed just as any other natural resource. First, management is needed to maintain the quality of our natural watercourses as drinking water supplies and for recreational activities such as swimming, fishing, water skiing, etc. Secondly, stormwater also needs to be managed to minimize damages that may occur when stormwater runoff exceeds the capacity of the pipes and open channels used to carry stormwater to our rivers and streams.

Q. What is the City currently doing about these problems?

A. Historically, the City has performed maintenance of the stormwater collection system, which includes cleaning, repair and replacement of the City's stormwater infrastructure. The City also regulates the effects of stormwater runoff from new development. Most recently, the Federal Government has mandated that all cities the size of Lebanon implement a series of programs and services to improve water quality.

Q. What is the City's responsibility for storm water?

A. The City is responsible for the water quality of natural streams within its jurisdiction as designed by the State and EPA. The City is also responsible for managing all aspects of stormwater within its jurisdiction. The City operates and maintains drainage facilities that are located within the public right-of-way or public easements. The City does not maintain facilities that are located on private property or that fall under the jurisdiction of other governmental jurisdictions.

Q. How has the City paid for its stormwater services prior to the implementation of this new fee?

A. Stormwater services have been funded solely by revenue collected from fees assessed on new development and with some General Fund (property tax) support. Stormwater must compete for these funds with other City services such as parks, roads, fire, police, etc. Due to the high demand on the General Fund over the past several years, the City has not been able to set aside enough funds to adequately address all the City's stormwater needs. Although the City has done a good job managing the existing program on a limited budget, the backlog of stormwater projects has grown and the new, federally mandated programs that must be implemented have strained existing resources.

Q. Why has the City of Lebanon chosen to implement a separate fee for stormwater management?

A. By establishing a dedicated funding source through stormwater fees, the City can ensure that the revenue required to manage and to maintain this important system is available. Fees will support the development of a comprehensive stormwater management and water quality improvement plan, as mandated by the Federal and State governments. Additional funds raised through the stormwater fee will also allow the City to provide an increased level of system maintenance and repair that is necessary to support the aging infrastructure in Lebanon. Finally, the utility fees will enable the City to construct necessary capital improvement projects to reduce the risk to public health and safety.

Q. What is the basis for the fee that is charged?

A. The stormwater utility fee is based on the square footage of impervious surface area on your property.

- Single-family home \leq 1,500 sq. ft. – \$1.50 per month
- Single-family home $>$ 1,500 sq. ft. – \$2.50 per month

See attached chart for additional information.

Q. What is impervious surface area?

A. Impervious surface area is any surface that does not readily absorb water and impedes the natural infiltration of water into the soil. In terms of the ordinance, it means the number of square feet of horizontal surface covered by buildings, and other impervious surfaces. Common examples include buildings, building foundations, storage tanks, pavement, parking areas & driveways, sidewalks, runways, hardened

athletic courts, patios, decks, gravel surfaces, areas of packed unvegetated soil, swimming pools/paved areas surrounding swimming pools, or any other impermeable surface.

Q. Why do I have to pay a stormwater fee?

A. The City is responsible for compliance with Federal and State regulations on water quality as well as providing stormwater management facilities and services. This includes installation and maintenance of storm drains, inlets, and ditches as well as ensuring State programs such as erosion and sediment control are provided on construction sites. All of these services are performed to protect personal and public property as well as provide for a healthy environment. Funding is not provided by Federal or State government for these services.

Q. When will the stormwater fee take effect?

A. The Stormwater Utility Fee was adopted by Council within the FY 2017-2019 City of Lebanon Budget (June 2017). The formalized ordinance establishing a utility for stormwater management and creating an enterprise fund and a method of funding was adopted August 1, 2017). It is anticipated that stormwater fees will be added to City of Lebanon utility bills as a separate line item beginning October 2017.

Q. Why is there a stormwater fee instead of a tax?

A. A property's value does not affect runoff, so property taxes are not the most equitable way to pay for stormwater services. For example, a high-rise building and a shopping mall may have similar value and pay similar property taxes. However, the shopping center produces more runoff because of the amount of parking and rooftops. The fee system ensures the shopping center (the property with the greater amount of impervious surface) pays a higher stormwater fee than the high rise (which has fewer square feet of impervious surface).

Q. Are tax-exempt properties also exempt from the stormwater fee?

A. No, because it is a fee - not a tax. Taxes are based on the value of the property. The stormwater fee is assessed based on the amount of impervious surface on the property (i.e. hard surfaces such as roofs, driveways and parking lots), which is directly related to the amount of runoff the property produces. The runoff generated by these impervious surfaces contributes to pollution and flooding problems, therefore all property owners should pay their share of the costs.

Q. How will residential properties be billed?

A. Residential properties (single-family homes) with 400-1500 square feet of impervious area (base area determined by data from Wilson County Tax Assessor's Office) will be charged a rate of \$1.50 each month (R-Tier 1). Residential (single-family homes) with greater than (>) 1500 square feet of impervious area will be charged a rate of \$2.50 each month (R-Tier 2). Duplex fees will be calculated as above, however the rate will be split equally between tenants (R-Tier 3). If you are located in other types of non-single-family property (residential condo, townhouse, etc) the fee will be set at \$3.50 (per unit) each month. Note: Apartments are not categorized as residential property. Apartments are categorized as non-residential property (see next question below) meaning apartment owners are responsible for fees at the non-residential rate.

Q. How are non-residential property fees determined?

A. All remaining properties (those that are not categorized as residential above) are considered to be non-residential (NR) properties. Non-residential properties area also billed based on amount of impervious area:

<u>NR-Tier</u>	<u>Non-Residential Impervious Area (square feet)</u>	<u>Monthly fee</u>
-	Less than (<) 400 sq. ft.	\$0.00
NR-Tier 1	400-6,000 sq. ft.	\$15.00
NR-Tier 2	>6,000-15,000 sq. ft.	\$25.00
NR-Tier 3	>15,000-35,000 sq. ft.	\$35.00
NR-Tier 4	>35,000-60,000 sq. ft.	\$50.00
NR-Tier 5	>60,000-100,000 sq. ft.	\$75.00
NR-Tier 6	>100,000-300,000 sq. ft.	\$200.00
NR-Tier 7	>300,000-1,000,000 sq. ft.	\$400.00
NR-Tier 8	>1,000,000 sq. ft.	\$600.00

Q. What if I disagree with the impervious area measurement used to determine my stormwater fee?

A. To report a stormwater/drainage concern or problem, please visit City of Lebanon's website <http://tn-lebanon.civicplus.com/> and select any of the following paths:

- **Government >City Council >Report Drainage Concerns/Issues**
- **Services >Report a Drainage Concern**
- **How Do I... >Report Drainage Concerns**

Q. Is there anything I can do to reduce my fee?

A. Yes, the City is in the process of developing a fee reduction/credit manual that will provide opportunities for **non-residential** customers to reduce their monthly fee. Credits/reductions will be awarded to customers that install best management practices on site that will reduce the runoff burden to the City's stormwater system. More information will be available in the City's Stormwater Utility Fee Credit Manual.

Q. What will the money collected by the Stormwater Utility be used for?

A. The fees will pay for annual compliance requirements of the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) MS4 permit, which is a program mandated by the State and Federal government. Revenue generated by this fee will also be used to fund all stormwater-related services, which include enforcement of the City's stormwater ordinances, planning for future impacts, stormwater infrastructure maintenance and repairs, construction of necessary capital improvement projects and associated property acquisitions.

Q. Do other cities have a stormwater fee?

A. Many cities in Tennessee (and over 1,300 nationwide) have a stormwater utility and fee. In middle Tennessee, cities such as Goodlettsville, Murfreesboro, Franklin, Smyrna, White House, Spring Hill, Springfield, Portland, and Nashville have stormwater utility fees. Gallatin and Hendersonville are both in process of enacting a stormwater utility fee.

Q. What are the goals of City of Lebanon's stormwater program?

A. The stormwater program focuses on improving and protecting the quality of our streams, rivers, and lakes and focuses on reducing the potential for loss of life or property due to flooding.

Q. Why do I have to pay when I do not have any drainage problems?

A. Everyone in the City benefits from the Stormwater Management Program even if they do not experience drainage problems on their property. The City services all citizens in providing programs and funding to manage stormwater quality and manages increases in runoff and pollutants. Direct benefits include: complying with Federal and State mandates, educating our children about pollution, improving water quality, providing safe roadways, protecting your property from upstream runoff, and protecting property downstream from your runoff.

Q. I have a stormwater/drainage concern in my yard. How do I get help with this problem?

A. To report a stormwater/drainage concern, please visit City of Lebanon's website <http://www.lebanontn.org> and select any one of the following paths to submit a form:

- **Government >City Council >Report Drainage Concerns/Issues**
- **Services >Report a Drainage Concern**
- **How Do I... >Report Drainage Concerns**

Some drainage complaints that the City receives are for problems on private property that the City has no authority to address (the existence of a Stormwater Utility will not change that). Submit your request using the online form and the City will investigate your concern and advise you of what action can be taken and whether or not the City will be able to help resolve.

Q. I have questions regarding the stormwater utility rates and program. How can I learn more?

A. Please visit City of Lebanon's website <http://www.lebanontn.org> and select the following path to learn more about the stormwater utility rates and program:

- **Government >Departments>Stormwater Utility>Quick Links**

You may also call the Public Works Administration Executive Assistant at 615-444-3647 ext. 2325.





City of Lebanon - Stormwater Fees

Residential Properties

	Impervious Area (sq ft)	Fee Amount (per month)
Single-Family Home	< 400	\$0.00
Single-Family Home	400 - 1500	\$1.50
Single-Family Home	> 1500	\$2.50
Duplex	400 - 1500	\$1.50 (to be split in 1/2 between the two sides)
Duplex	> 1500	\$2.50 (to be split in 1/2 between the two sides)
Residential Condos/Townhouses	(not applicable)	\$3.50 (per unit)



Non-Residential Properties

	Impervious Area (sq ft)	Fee Amount (per month)
Non-Residential Property	< 400	\$0.00
NR-Tier 1	400 - 6,000	\$15.00
NR-Tier 2	> 6,000 - 15,000	\$25.00
NR-Tier 3	> 15,000 - 35,000	\$35.00
NR-Tier 4	> 35,000 - 60,000	\$50.00
NR-Tier 5	> 60,000 - 100,000	\$75.00
NR-Tier 6	> 100,000 - 300,000	\$200.00
NR-Tier 7	> 300,000 - 1,000,000	\$400.00
NR-Tier 8	> 1,000,000	\$600.00

*Apartments are non-residential properties. Apartment complex owner is responsible for fee based on total sq ft of impervious area.