

# 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 For customers whose bills are inaccurate because of outdated or incorrect data, DWSD has a process for customers to seek an adjustment of the billing data.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.

## Contents

<b>Adjustments</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Ownership Adjustments .....	3
Geographic Information System Polygon Orientation Correction.....	3
<b>Impervious Cover Modification</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Impervious Area Adjustments .....	4
Impervious Classification .....	4
<b>Stormwater Discharged to Surface Waters</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Adjustment Application Procedures</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Adjustment Application.....	5
Supporting Documentation .....	5
Application Forms .....	7
Application Submission .....	7
Adjustment Application Denials.....	7



**Policies** ..... 7

    Property Owner Responsibilities.....7

    DWSD Responsibilities .....8

    Adjustment Credit Date for Modifications to Impervious Area .....8

    Adjustment Credit Date for Impervious Area Corrections .....8

    Data Validation .....9



## 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DWSD will update drainage charge billing information when data is proven to be outdated or incorrect.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.

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

#### Did You Know?

435 square feet is approximately equal to a two-car garage



**NOTE:** Impervious area adjustments **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.

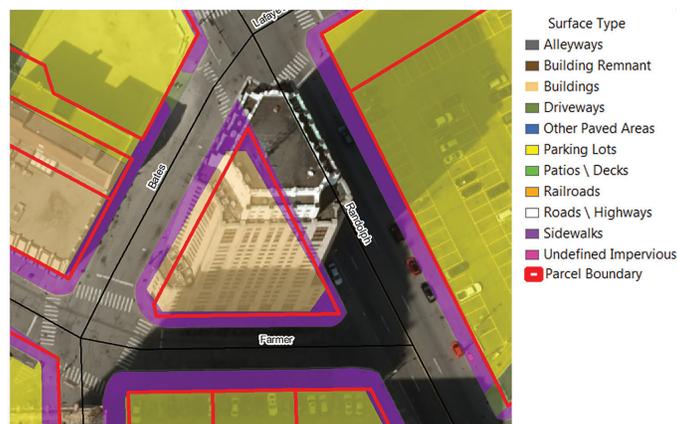


Figure 1: Parcel Boundary and Aerial Image

## 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.



### Stormwater Discharged to Surface Waters

For some customers, a portion or all of their property discharges stormwater 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.

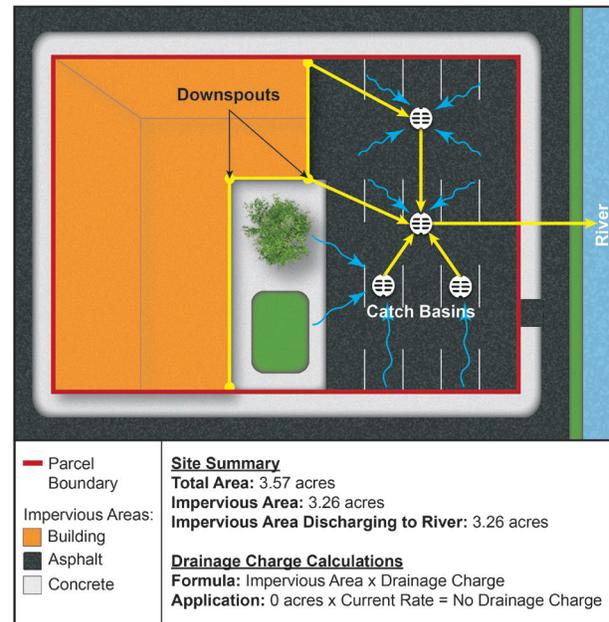


Figure 2: 100% Stormwater Discharge to Surface Water

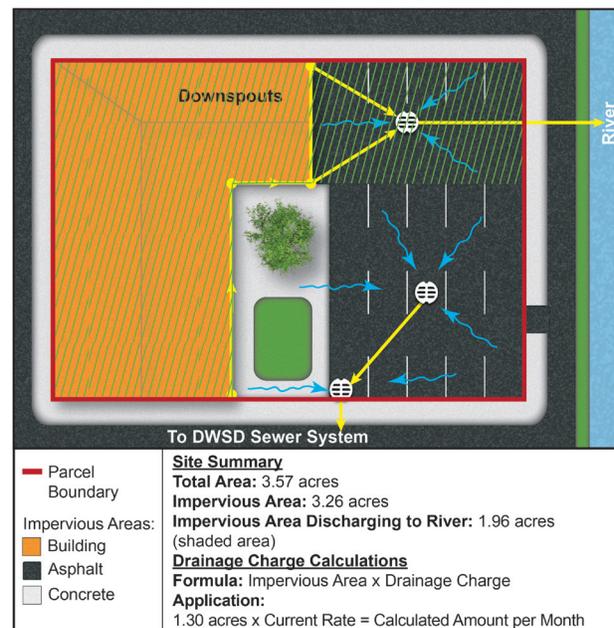


Figure 3: Partial Stormwater Discharge to Surface Water



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

1. The stormwater 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 stormwater 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).

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](http://www.detroitmi.gov/drainage).

## Adjustment Application Procedures

The purpose of the adjustment application process is to enable customers to seek adjustments for inaccurate parcel boundaries or sizes, incorrect parcel identification, or for errors in the calculation of a parcel's impervious area as outlined in the previous sections.

To view information related to your property, please see the link to the Parcel Viewer at [[www.detroitmi.gov/drainage](http://www.detroitmi.gov/drainage)] or [<http://arcg.is/29KWCPY>]. This site includes information for each parcel in DWSD's service area, including pervious, impervious, and total acreage.



*Figure 4: Screen Shot of the Parcel Viewer*

## Adjustment Application

A property owner, owner's authorized representative, or account holder may initiate a Drainage Charge Adjustment Application (Figure 5). The customer may question multiple issues in a single adjustment application.

## Supporting Documentation

For all applications, the customer should provide a brief written description of the reason for the drainage charge adjustment request. Additionally, the following documentation must be provided along with the Drainage Charge Adjustment Application:

### *For Ownership Adjustments*

Supporting documentation recommended for this type of adjustment will depend on the reason for the inaccuracy.

- ◆ Incorrect mailing address: current owner and mailing address for parcel, if known
- ◆ Property sale: copy of a deed documenting the property transfer
- ◆ Water account associated with incorrect parcel: copy of water bill

## 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 Charge Adjustment Application 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)
- Other information

If DWSD is unable to make a determination based on the information submitted, then DWSD may request additional information.

## Stormwater Discharge Directly to Surface Waters

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

- Drawings and/or site plans with calculations. The drawings/site plans and calculations need to be stamped by a registered Professional Engineer (P.E.) or Landscape Architect to show the storm sewer system, the topography, and the portion of the property that drains to surface waters.
- Site photographs
- The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) stormwater permit (if a non-residential customer).
- Any other documentation requested by DWSD.

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

The image shows a form titled "Drainage Charge Adjustment Application" from the DWSD Drainage Program. The form includes contact information for DWSD, a section for property owner details (name, address, phone, email), a section for service location (address, parcel ID, account number), and a section for property classification (Industrial, Commercial, Residential, Tax Exempt, Faith Based). It also has a section for a reason for adjustment request and a footer with contact information for DWSD.

Figure 5: Drainage Charge Adjustment Application



*If DWSD is unable to make a determination based on the information submitted, then DWSD may request additional information.*



## Application Forms

The Drainage Charge Adjustment Application is available online at: [www.detroitmi.gov/drainage](http://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 Program  
6425 Huber  
Detroit, MI 48211

Alternatively, applications can be faxed to 313.842.6495 or emailed to: [drainage@detroitmi.gov](mailto:drainage@detroitmi.gov).

Customers with additional questions should call: 313.267.8000, option 6.

**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 Program at [drainage@detroitmi.gov](mailto:drainage@detroitmi.gov) or 313.267.8000, option 6 to initiate a formal appeal process.

## Policies

### Property Owner Responsibilities

DWSD 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.

Customers are advised to continue paying 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).

If the customer is notified that an application is incomplete, they will have 30 days to provide the required information or to contact DWSD to request additional time to provide the missing information. If the application is not administratively complete or if DWSD has not been contacted by the customer, 30 days after notification, a second letter will be sent out indicating application will

The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "Detroit Water & Sewerage Department Water & Sewer Application for Service". The form is divided into two main sections: "Applicant Information" and "Property Information".

**Applicant Information Section:**

- Business Name/DBA: (text field)
- First Name: (text field), Middle Initial: (text field), Last Name: (text field)
- Driver's License/ State ID Number: (text field), Expiration (MM/YYYY): (text field), Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY): (text field)
- Mailing Address if different from Water Service Address: (text field)
- City: (text field), State: (text field), Zip Code: (text field), Phone Number: (text field)
- Alternate Phone Number: (text field), Best time to contact applicant: (text field), Email: (text field)
- Co-Applicant First Name: (text field), Middle Initial: (text field), Co-Applicant Last Name: (text field)
- Tax Identification Number/employer Identification Number: (text field)

**Property Information Section:**

- Address to Start Water Service: (text field)
- City: (text field), State: (text field), Zip Code: (text field), Will you own or rent the property: (radio buttons for Rent, Own)
- Closing Date (MM/DD/YYYY): (text field), Start Service Date (MM/DD/YYYY): (text field), Type of Property: (radio buttons for Residential, Commercial, Two Family Flat, Duplex)

*Figure 6: Water and Sewer Application for Service for New Accounts Receiving Water and Sewerage Services*

## Drainage Program Guide

be closed in 10 days. After the 10 days, the application will be closed, however the customer may resubmit an application when they have the requested 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.

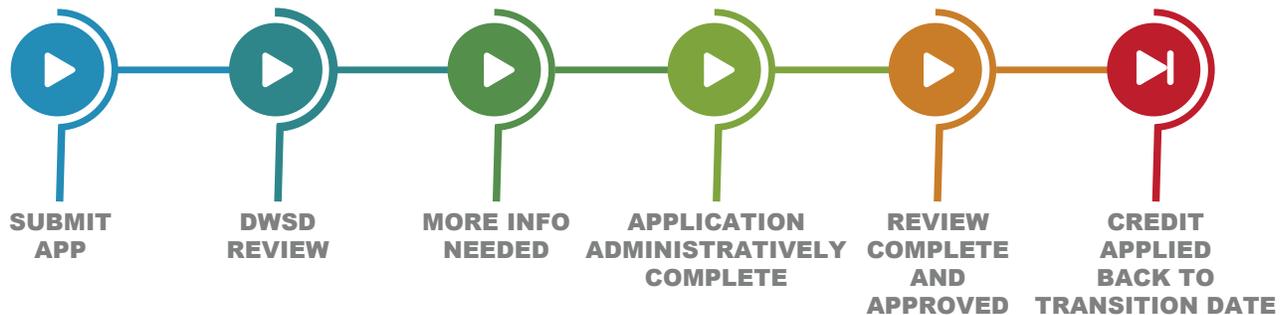
### Adjustment Credit Date for Modifications to Impervious Area

Once approved, the effective date of the bill adjustment for parcel application will be the date the application was submitted to DWSD and administratively complete. DWSD processing time of application will not impact the effective date of the adjustment.



### Adjustment Credit Date for Impervious Area Corrections

The effective date for impervious area corrections will be the transition data from the new drainage billing methodology.

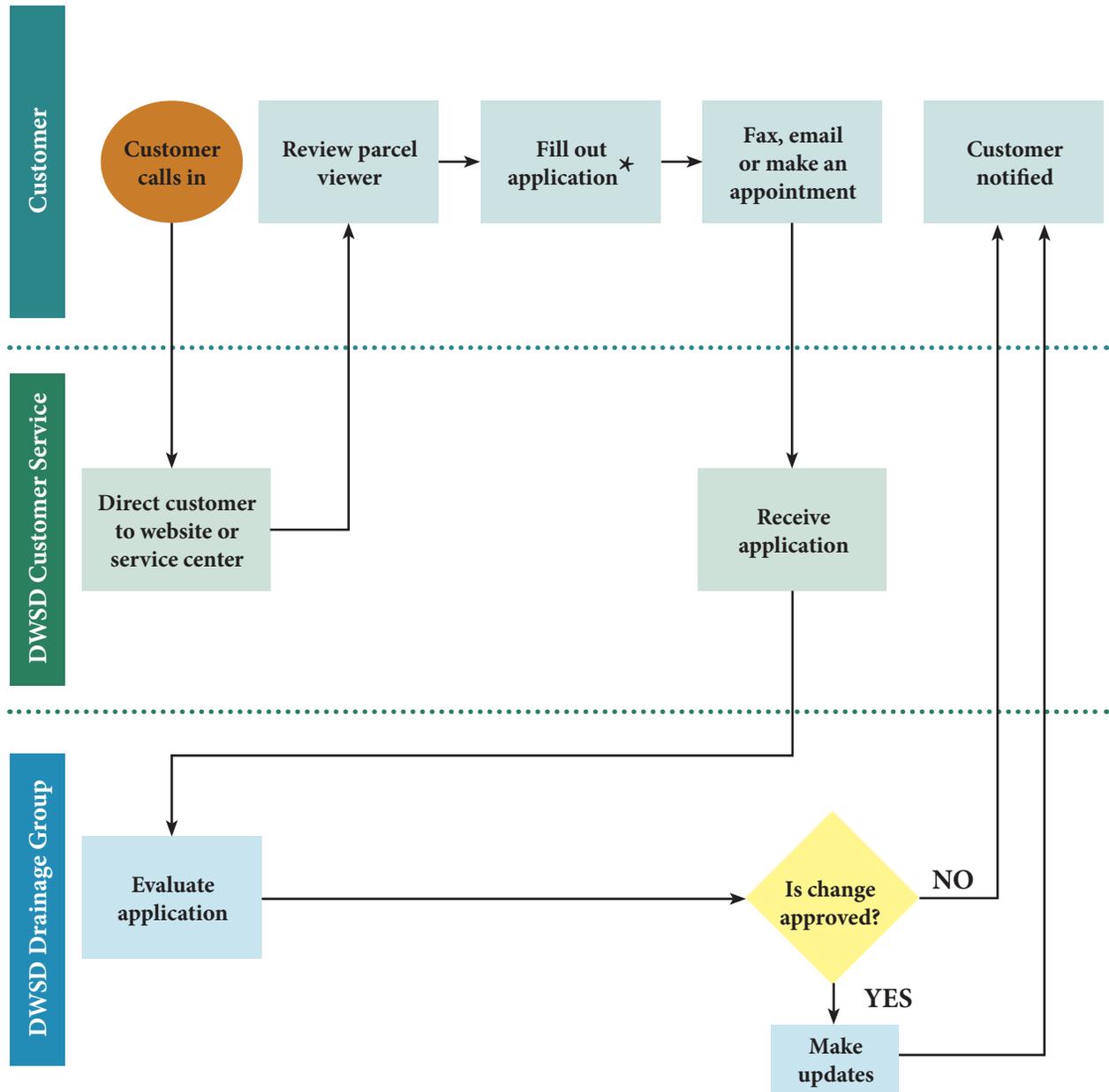


**Data Validation**

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 sufficient 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 7: Customer Adjustment Process

