



Stormwater Credit Program Guidebook

How To Use This Guidebook

Welcome to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC) Stormwater Credit Program! The purpose of this guidebook is to help customers and applicants understand and join the Stormwater Credit Program, from project planning to applying for the stormwater credit.

The introduction provides a summary of the program and its requirements. The following portions of the guidebook give details on credit calculation, design and construction, maintenance, and inspections, and how to apply. It is important to read the full guidebook before you apply, so you can understand all the requirements to receive a stormwater credit. If you have questions, you may contact Stormwater Credit Program staff at 415-554-0708 or at StormwaterCredits@SFWater.org.

Program Summary

What is the stormwater credit?

The stormwater credit is a reduction on the stormwater charge portion of your bill. The monthly credit is based on the area of a property that drains to green infrastructure when it rains. Larger green infrastructure projects that capture more stormwater over a larger area receive larger credits.

Eligibility

SFPUC customers receiving a stormwater charge on their bill and who build green infrastructure, such as cisterns, rain gardens, and permeable pavement, are eligible for the stormwater credit. The green infrastructure must meet SFPUC standards, including a minimum requirement for the area draining to green infrastructure. See the Design and Construction section below for more details. Applicants may apply on behalf of a customer, with the customer's permission.

The stormwater credit has a maximum limit of 90%. In other words, customers may not receive more than 90% off their stormwater charge. This limit accounts for fixed costs and the fact that green infrastructure does not capture 100% of all stormwater runoff.

Credit Calculation

This section shows how to estimate your stormwater credit. [Calculate](#) your estimated stormwater credit on the [Stormwater Charge Lookup](#) or use the tables and formula below. You can also estimate credits by using the [stormwater credit application](#) without submitting.

SFPUC calculates the stormwater credit differently depending on the rate. There are two rates, the standard rate, and the simplified residential rate.

Standard Rate

Standard rate customers receive credits based on the area draining to green infrastructure. This area is often called the Drainage Management Area. The more area customers collect from, the more credits they receive. Customers collecting stormwater from impermeable area receive credits at a higher rate than permeable area. The standard rate applies to customers on properties with any of the following characteristics:

1. Property over 6,000 square feet
2. More than six dwelling units per parcel (most large apartment buildings)
3. A non-residential service agreement.

For example, these three properties would all fall under the standard rate:

1. A single-family home on land with a property size of 7,000 square feet.
2. A large condominium building with 200 units
3. A two-story building with two apartments on the second floor and a business on the first floor.

Standard Rate Formula

$$\text{Impermeable Area Credit} = \left(\frac{\text{Impermeable area rate} \left[\frac{\$}{1,000 \text{ft}^2} \right]}{\text{area rate}} \right) \left(\frac{\text{Impermeable area managed by GI} \text{ [ft}^2\text{]}}{\text{managed by GI}} \right)$$

$$\text{Permeable Area Credit} = \left(\frac{\text{Permeable area rate} \left[\frac{\$}{1,000 \text{ft}^2} \right]}{\text{area rate}} \right) \left(\frac{\text{Permeable area managed by GI} \text{ [ft}^2\text{]}}{\text{managed by GI}} \right)$$

$$\text{Stormwater Credit} = \text{Impermeable Area Credit} + \text{Permeable Area Credit}$$

The impermeable and permeable area rates used in the formula are [published by the SFPUC](#). The rates for the next three years are found in the table below.

| Stormwater Charge Rates | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024 | July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025 | July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026 |
| Standard Rate | | | |
| Permeable (\$/1,000 square feet) | \$0.19 | \$0.41 | \$0.67 |
| Impermeable (\$/1,000 square feet) | \$1.89 | \$4.11 | \$6.72 |

Simplified Residential Rate

The simplified residential rate applies to most residential customers. These customers receive a flat credit when building green infrastructure from a fixed menu. Simplified residential rate customers are split into three tiers based on property size (square feet): tier 1 is 0 – 1,700, tier 2 is 1,701 – 3,300, tier 3 is 3,301 – 6,000. The flat credits are calculated by the average stormwater credit for all properties in a tier. Properties in the simplified residential rate must have all the following characteristics:

1. Property size of 6,000 square feet or less
2. Six dwelling units or less
3. Only residential service agreements

For example, the following properties would all fall under the Simplified Residential Rate:

1. A single-family home on a 5,000 square foot property
2. A four-plex (four apartments) on a 4,000 square foot property.

Simplified Residential Rate Formula

$$\textit{Stormwater Credit} = \textit{Ground Level Credit} + \textit{Roof Credit}$$

Use the tables below to find your ground level and roof credit. For example, if you are in Tier 1, it is August 2023, and you are collecting stormwater from 250 square feet of ground level (\$0.58) and 450 square feet of roof area (\$0.92), you would add the credits together to get your final stormwater credit. In this case you would receive \$1.50 (\$0.58 + \$0.92) off your stormwater charge.

The size of impermeable area draining to your green infrastructure is the main factor in calculating your simplified residential stormwater credit. The size of the green infrastructure itself is not part of the formula. For example, a 200 square foot rain garden will not count towards the total drainage management area for either the ground level or roof source. The rain garden is still necessary to collect and manage the stormwater. For permeable pavement, the impermeable area it replaces is considered the impermeable drainage management area. 700 square feet of permeable pavers replacing a concrete driveway would count towards 700 square feet of ground level drainage management area.

Simplified Residential Stormwater Rate Tiers for July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

| Drainage Management Area Source | Tier 1 | | Tier 2 | | Tier 3 | | Monthly Credit (% of Stormwater Charge) |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| | Impermeable Drainage Management Area (sq ft) | Stormwater Credit | Impermeable Drainage Management Area (sq ft) | Stormwater Credit | Impermeable Drainage Management Area (sq ft) | Stormwater Credit | |
| Ground Level | 100-200 | \$0.35 | 200-400 | \$0.54 | 300-600 | \$0.81 | 15% |
| | >200 | \$0.58 | >400 | \$0.90 | >600 | \$1.35 | 25% |
| Roof | 400-600 | \$0.92 | 600-900 | \$1.44 | 800-1,200 | \$2.16 | 40% |
| | >600 | \$1.39 | >900 | \$2.16 | >1,200 | \$3.24 | 60% |

Simplified Residential Stormwater Rate Tiers for July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

| Drainage Management Area Source | Tier 1 | | Tier 2 | | Tier 3 | | Monthly Credit (% of Stormwater Charge) |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| | Impermeable Drainage Management Area (sq ft) | Stormwater Credit | Impermeable Drainage Management Area (sq ft) | Stormwater Credit | Impermeable Drainage Management Area (sq ft) | Stormwater Credit | |
| Ground Level | 100-200 | \$0.76 | 200-400 | \$1.18 | 300-600 | \$1.77 | 15% |
| | >200 | \$1.26 | >400 | \$1.96 | >600 | \$2.95 | 25% |
| Roof | 400-600 | \$2.01 | 600-900 | \$3.14 | 800-1,200 | \$4.71 | 40% |
| | >600 | \$3.02 | >900 | \$4.70 | >1,200 | \$7.07 | 60% |

Simplified Residential Stormwater Rate Tiers for July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

| Drainage Management Area Source | Tier 1 | | Tier 2 | | Tier 3 | | Monthly Credit (% of Stormwater Charge) |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| | Impermeable Drainage Management Area (sq ft) | Stormwater Credit | Impermeable Drainage Management Area (sq ft) | Stormwater Credit | Impermeable Drainage Management Area (sq ft) | Stormwater Credit | |
| Ground Level | 100-200 | \$1.24 | 200-400 | \$1.92 | 300-600 | \$2.89 | 15% |
| | >200 | \$2.06 | >400 | \$3.20 | >600 | \$4.82 | 25% |
| Roof | 400-600 | \$3.29 | 600-900 | \$5.13 | 800-1,200 | \$7.71 | 40% |
| | >600 | \$4.94 | >900 | \$7.69 | >1,200 | \$11.56 | 60% |

Credit Split

If applying for a stormwater credit on a property with multiple service accounts, the default distribution of the credit is equally split across all accounts on the property. For example, three accounts on a property would each receive a third (33.3%) of the credit. No further documentation is needed if the applicant agrees with this split. If a customer has already changed their stormwater charge split through the appeals process, the stormwater credit split will match that same split.

Applicants may choose a customized credit split for accounts on the property, increasing or decreasing the share of the credit each specific account receives. For example, a property with two accounts may choose to have one account receive 75% of the credit and give the remaining 25% to the other account. **If seeking a customized stormwater credit split, applicants must include a signed agreement from all account holders on the property with their application.**

Design and Construction

This section explains the process and requirements for designing and constructing your green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure eligible for the stormwater credit must be located and sized appropriately to capture all stormwater runoff from the 90th percentile storm (0.75-inch over the entire drainage area). The design performance requirements for the [Standard Rate](#) and [Simplified Residential Rate](#) are on the SFPUC website. There are also minimum drainage area requirements, see the table below. Applicants can show they have met the design requirements by submitting results from SFPUC stormwater performance [calculators](#), such as the ones provided by the [Stormwater Management Requirements](#) or [Green Infrastructure Grant Program](#). Projects that meet the SFPUC requirements of the [Stormwater Management Ordinance](#) in both combined and separate sewer areas also meet the performance requirement of the Stormwater Credit Program.

| Minimum Drainage Area Table | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Customer Type | Minimum area draining to green infrastructure (square feet) |
| Simplified Residential Rate - Tier 1 | 100 – impermeable area only |
| Simplified Residential Rate - Tier 2 | 200 – impermeable area only |
| Simplified Residential Rate - Tier 3 | 300 – impermeable area only |
| Standard Rate | 1,000 |

SFPUC offers grant programs that can pay for the upfront costs of building green infrastructure. The [Green Infrastructure Grant Program](#) funds the design and construction of green infrastructure on large public and private properties. The [Green Infrastructure Grants for Homes](#) is a limited pilot program to provide funding for the installation of green infrastructure projects on small residential properties. Visit their pages for more information on how to apply.

Industry professionals specializing in engineering, landscape architecture, or green infrastructure can help customers design and install appropriately sized green infrastructure. Traditional landscaping areas, such as lawns or a flower garden, are not eligible for stormwater credits.

Green infrastructure types may include:

- Bioretention (rain gardens)
 - Stormwater facilities that rely on vegetation and specially engineered soils to capture, infiltrate, transpire, and remove pollutants from runoff. SFPUC encourages customers to plant trees when appropriate in rain gardens.
- Permeable pavement
 - Any porous, load-bearing surface that temporarily stores rainwater.
- Rainwater cisterns

- Cisterns that collect roof runoff and provide water for indoor or outdoor use.
- Infiltration trenches or galleries
 - An unvegetated, rock-filled trench that receives surface stormwater runoff and allows it to infiltrate.
- Green roofs (vegetated roof)
 - Roofs that are entirely or mostly covered with vegetation and soil.

Maintenance and Inspections

This section explains important information on maintenance and inspection requirements to keep the Stormwater Credit.

Maintenance

Green infrastructure facilities must be kept in a working condition. Credit customers must submit a self-certification annually, starting October 15, 2024. SFPUC staff will contact credit customers with self-certification information. The annual self-certification states that the green infrastructure facilities work as intended. The stormwater credit will be removed if a customer does not submit an annual self-certification by October 15th or if at any point the green infrastructure is no longer in good working condition. The storm water credit will then be removed from the next customer bill.

SFPUC provides a [Green Infrastructure Maintenance Guide Book](#) to help keep your green infrastructure in good condition. Examples of maintenance required for different Green Infrastructure types:

- Bioretention (rain gardens)
 - Weeding, trimming, cleaning (trash/debris/woody material removal), watering
- Permeable pavement
 - Cleaning, twice a year vacuuming.
- Rainwater cisterns
 - Cleaning pipes, repairing leaks, replacing filters
- Infiltration trenches or galleries
 - Soil refill, cleaning
- Green roofs (vegetated roof)
 - Fertilization, weeding, trimming, cleaning, watering

Inspections

Credit customers must agree to green infrastructure inspections by SFPUC staff. SFPUC inspectors will coordinate with a building owner to schedule an inspection if needed.

SFPUC staff will require customers to fix green infrastructure issues if any are found during the self-certification review or inspection. Customers who submit verification of the fixes will renew the Stormwater Credit.

Inspections under other stormwater programs, such as the Stormwater Management Ordinance, may count towards the inspection for the Stormwater Credit Program.

Property Owner Change

The stormwater credit will stay with the property and associated green infrastructure if the property owner changes. The new owner of the property will receive the same credit split and be responsible for the same maintenance and self-certification requirements. The new owner must submit another credit application to make any changes in the credit split.

Application

This part of the guidebook gives you step-by-step instructions for how to fill out the stormwater credit application.

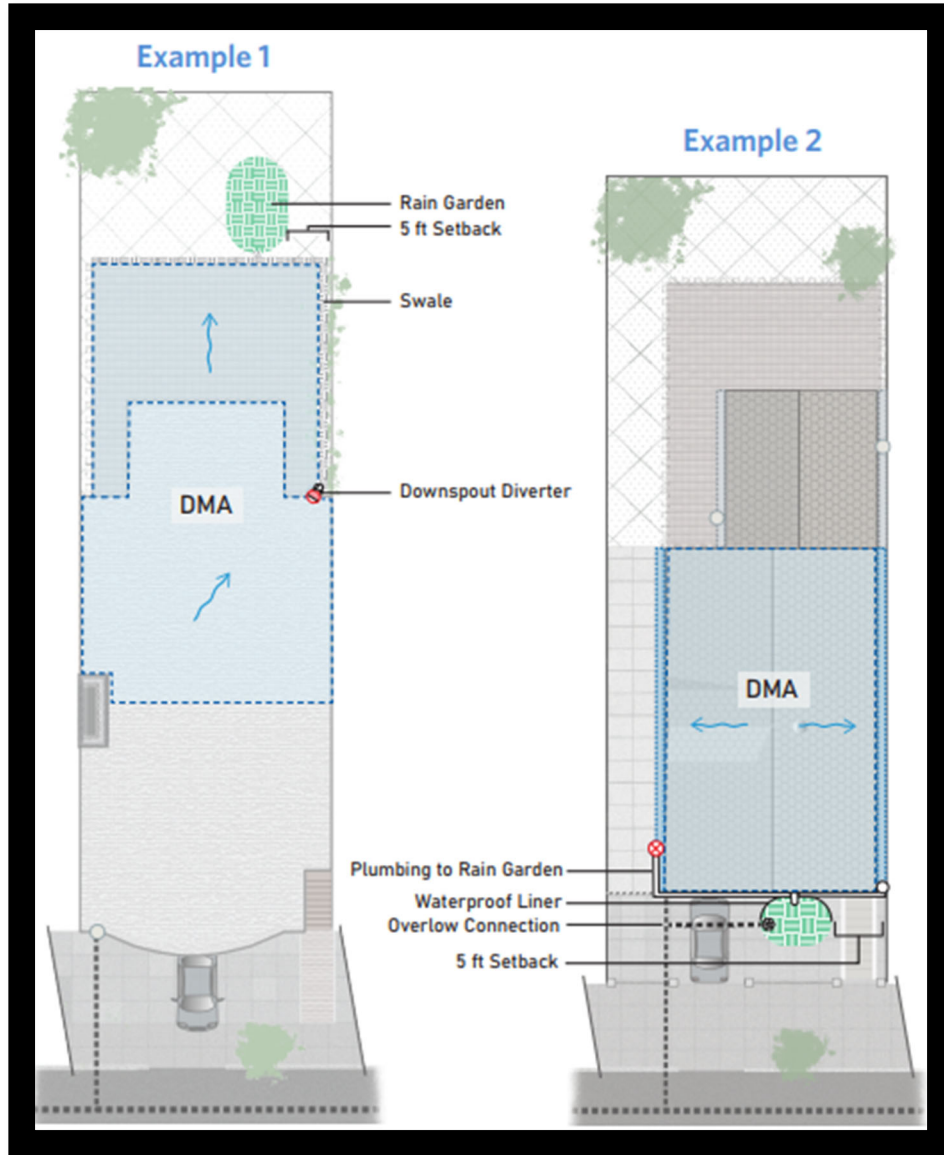
You may apply online at the [Stormwater Charge Lookup website](#). You can also print an application at home or pick up the form at the Customer Service window on the 1st floor of 525 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102. Download the [standard rate application](#) or the [simplified residential rate application](#). Submit paper applications to the Customer Service window in person or by mail to the Stormwater Credit Program, 11th Floor, 525 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Applicants can apply on behalf of an SFPUC customer, such as an adult applying for their elderly parent.

Application Instructions

Applicants will need to provide the following information on the application form:

- Account number
 - Look at your bill, call customer service, or log into the [MyAccount](#) portal to find your account number
- ZIP code
- Applicant name
- Customer name
- Applicant phone number
- Applicant email address
- Customer property address (paper application only)
- Green Infrastructure Details
 - For each green infrastructure facility you have built, enter the required information. To add another green infrastructure facility on the online application, click the plus sign button.
 - Impermeable area (square feet) draining to green infrastructure
 - Area such as concrete, asphalt, buildings, decking.
 - Example 1 below shows the area draining to green infrastructure, also known as the Drainage Management Area (DMA), in a dashed blue outline. The roof and patio of the home drain to the rain garden and swale in the back yard. The applicant in example 1 would input the area of the roof and patio. The applicant for example 2 would enter just the area of the roof.



- Standard rate only: permeable area draining to green infrastructure
 - Area such as grass or landscape (not including the green infrastructure itself).
- Green infrastructure facility area
 - The combined area of all facilities. In example 1 above, the applicant would enter the area of the rain garden and the swale separately.
- Type of green infrastructure
 - Green infrastructure types include rain gardens, permeable pavement, infiltration trenches, cisterns and more.
- Simplified residential rate only: source of stormwater
 - Ground level sources may include patios, driveways, decking, porches, and verandas.

- Roof level sources include building roofs and any other elevated impermeable area.
- Credit Split
 - The stormwater credit is by default split equally across all SFPUC accounts on a property.
 - If seeking a custom split, enter the percentage split per each account in the provided boxes. If submitting a paper application, include the appropriate account numbers.
- Green infrastructure plans
 - Attach green infrastructure plans, including locations and drainage management areas. Standard rate applicants must include plans stamped by an engineer or landscape architect.
 - Attach design standards proof (use the sizing calculator from the resources section below)
- Green infrastructure photos
 - Provide photos taken within the past three months of the application date.
- Credit split agreement (custom split only)
 - By default, the credit is equally split across all accounts on a property with multiple accounts. No further action is needed if you agree with an equal split.
 - If splitting the stormwater credit unequally among multiple accounts, please attach a signed agreement. Include the names, addresses, SFPUC account numbers and signature dates of those party to the agreement.
- Self-certification
 - By checking this box you are agreeing to potential inspections by SFPUC staff and that the green infrastructure for your application meets the required [SFPUC stormwater design standards](#). You also acknowledge that the stormwater credit may be denied or revoked if determined to not meet SFPUC standards.
- Applicant comments
 - Please include additional information related to the green infrastructure or stormwater credit application

After submitting your application, the Stormwater Charge Lookup website will display your application number. Write down or otherwise save your application number for future reference. If submitting a paper application, SFPUC staff will contact you with an application number.

Resources

This section gives information on related programs and helpful tools.

- Look up your property's stormwater information and apply for the Stormwater Credit Program
 - [Stormwater Charge Lookup \(sfpuc.org\)](https://www.sfpuc.org/sites/default/files/Stormwater_Credit_Program-Credit_Planning_%20Calculator_v1.xlsx)
 - [stormwater.sfpuc.org](https://www.sfpuc.org)
- Learn more about the stormwater charge
 - [Stormwater Charge \(sfpuc.org\)](https://www.sfpuc.org)
 - [sfpuc.org/accounts-services/water-power-sewer-rates/stormwater-charge](https://www.sfpuc.org/accounts-services/water-power-sewer-rates/stormwater-charge)
- Estimate your bill with the SFPUC bill calculator
 - [Water and Sewer Bill Calculator \(sfpuc.org\)](https://www.sfpuc.org)
 - [sfpuc.org/accounts-services/about-your-bill/water-and-sewer-bill-calculator](https://www.sfpuc.org/accounts-services/about-your-bill/water-and-sewer-bill-calculator)
- Calculate your estimated Stormwater Credit
 - https://www.sfpuc.org/sites/default/files/Stormwater_Credit_Program-Credit_Planning_%20Calculator_v1.xlsx
- Make sure your green infrastructure is the right size with the sizing calculator
 - [BMP_CSS-Sizer_v221_210701.xlsm \(live.com\)](https://www.live.com/officeapps/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fsfpuc.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fconstruction-and-contracts%2Fdesign-guidelines%2FBMP_CSS-Sizer_v221_210701.xlsm&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
 - https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fsfpuc.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fconstruction-and-contracts%2Fdesign-guidelines%2FBMP_CSS-Sizer_v221_210701.xlsm&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK
- Ways to save money on your bill
 - [Save Money on Your Utility Bill \(sfpuc.org\)](https://www.sfpuc.org)
 - [sfpuc.org/accounts-services/water-power-sewer-rates/save-money-on-your-utility-bill](https://www.sfpuc.org/accounts-services/water-power-sewer-rates/save-money-on-your-utility-bill)
- Different ways to pay your bill
 - [Payment Options \(sfpuc.org\)](https://www.sfpuc.org)
 - [sfpuc.org/accounts-services/account-services/payment-options](https://www.sfpuc.org/accounts-services/account-services/payment-options)
- SFPUC offers many types of grants to pay for green infrastructure and water saving projects
 - Visit [sfpuc.org/programs/grants](https://www.sfpuc.org/programs/grants) to learn more.
 - Green Infrastructure Grants for Homes
 - [Green Infrastructure Grants for Homes \(sfpuc.org\)](https://www.sfpuc.org)
 - [sfpuc.org/programs/grants/green-infrastructure-grants-homes](https://www.sfpuc.org/programs/grants/green-infrastructure-grants-homes)
 - Green Infrastructure Grant Program
 - [Green Infrastructure Grant \(sfpuc.org\)](https://www.sfpuc.org)
 - [sfpuc.org/programs/grants/green-infrastructure-grant](https://www.sfpuc.org/programs/grants/green-infrastructure-grant)
 - Onsite Water Reuse Grant Program
 - [Onsite Water Reuse Grant \(sfpuc.org\)](https://www.sfpuc.org)
 - [sfpuc.org/programs/grants/onsite-water-reuse-grant](https://www.sfpuc.org/programs/grants/onsite-water-reuse-grant)
 - Urban Watershed Stewardship Grant
 - [Urban Watershed Stewardship Grant \(sfpuc.org\)](https://www.sfpuc.org)

- sfpuc.org/programs/grants/urban-watershed-stewardship-grant
 - Rain Barrel and Cistern Rebate Program
 - [Rain Barrel and Cistern Rebate \(sfpuc.org\)](https://sfpuc.org/Rain%20Barrel%20and%20Cistern%20Rebate)
 - sfpuc.org/learning/how-you-can-help/rain-barrel-and-cistern-rebate
- Protect and maintain green infrastructure in your neighborhood by joining the Rain Guardians
 - [Rain Guardians \(sfpuc.org\)](https://sfpuc.org/Rain%20Guardians)
 - sfpuc.org/learning/how-you-can-help/rain-guardians
- Stormwater Management Ordinance
 - [Stormwater Requirements \(sfpuc.org\)](https://sfpuc.org/Stormwater%20Requirements)
 - sfpuc.org/construction-contracts/design-guidelines-standards/stormwater-requirements