

## Resource Guide for Credit Application

### Your Stormwater Charge

BWSC implemented a stormwater charge in 2024 along with a credit and grant awards program for customers. This step-by-step guide is meant to assist customers who would like to apply for a stormwater credit. Credits are awarded on a per parcel basis and all customers must submit an application in order to be considered. Customers are eligible if they meet BWSC specified requirements. Please see the information and instructions below and if you need further assistance with your application please do not hesitate to contact the Stormwater team at 617-989-7899 or via email at [stormwaterinfo@bwsc.org](mailto:stormwaterinfo@bwsc.org).

The stormwater charge is based upon each property's **impervious area**. Impervious area includes hard surfaces such as pavement, concrete, structures, roofs, compacted soil and crushed stone. Impervious areas cause more runoff to flow from a property and increase the number of pollutants, which flow to catch basins and enter the sewer system that BWSC is required to treat.

**Stormwater** is water that originates from precipitation events, such as rain or snow, and flows over land or impervious surfaces.



**Runoff** is water that flows over land or other surfaces and is not absorbed or infiltrated into the ground.



For more terms and definitions, please visit <https://www.bwsc.org/news-and-events/news/stormwater>

The Equivalent Residential Unit (**ERU**) is the billing unit used for stormwater. One ERU represents the amount of impervious area on a typical small residential property in Boston.

Here are examples:



#### Small Residential Properties (SRP)

1-6 family residential homes (excluding condominiums).  
Typical impervious area is 2,164 square feet which equals **one ERU**.  
Each property owner will be charged a single rate for **one ERU**.



#### Non-Small Residential Properties (NSRP)

All other properties including institutional, industrial, and commercial (including condominiums) will be charged **per ERU** of impervious area measured on the property. To calculate the stormwater charge the impervious area is divided by 2,164 square feet and rounded up to the next ERU.

## Example:



66,684 sq ft of impervious area measured on property.

$66,684 \text{ sq ft} \div 2,164 \text{ sq ft} = 31.8$ , rounded to 32 ERUs

## How to Apply to the Stormwater Credit Program

**Credits** can be applied to reduce your stormwater service cost. The credit program recognizes property owners for taking actions on their property that reduce their demand on BWSC's stormwater system.

Credit program applications will be available on the BWSC website. BWSC encourages all stormwater customers to review the application and apply, if eligible.

Applicants may apply for credits and receive a maximum **50%** credit off their stormwater charge.

**The Boston and Water Sewer Commission reserves discretion with respect to the application of a credit to a parcel with multiple premises.**



Pictured: Rain Garden in Boston

### **BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE CREDIT**

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are engineered systems that capture runoff and help reduce stormwater pollution. Customers can receive a **30%** credit off their stormwater charge for a demonstrated use of a Best Management Practice. BMPs described in the Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook that meet the BWSC minimum standards for retaining runoff at the time of BMP installation will be reviewed for a credit.

More information on BWSC standards for BMPs can be found at: <https://www.bwsc.org/builders-contractors/site-plan-requirements/storm-drain-requirements>

If your BMP was installed more than 5 years ago a Professional Engineer, National Green Infrastructure Certified professional, or licensed Landscape Architect must certify that the system works as designed. Once certified, the credit is valid for **5 years** from the date of acceptance, at which time you must reapply and recertify for the credit.

If your BMP was installed within the last five years you will need to apply for the credit but will **NOT** need to certify the BMP. You will still need to reapply and recertify for the credit 5 years after installation.

To receive a credit, all applicants must agree to the following terms:

- Perform appropriate maintenance as needed so that the BMP continues to operate to meet the required standards.
- Maintain a maintenance log (provided by BWSC).
- Agree to random inspections by BWSC or its designated consultant.

*Upon inspection, should any BMP fail to meet the required standards, BWSC will remove the stormwater charge credit for that property. The applicant will need to reapply and recertify their BMP to reinstate the credit.*

#### **PROTECTED LAND CREDIT**

- ✓ Credit up to **50%** for customers who take actions on their property that reduce their demand on BWSC stormwater system. The following requirements must be met:
  - Must have protected land status (Documentation must be provided).
  - Parcels must have greater than 1 acre of impervious area.
  - Property owner must provide documentation to prove that less than 10% of their stormwater runoff discharges to BWSC's system.
  - Landscaping program must be maintained so that the property remains clear of any leaves and debris.
  - No fertilizers can be used on the property.

#### **Eligible BMPs**

- Subsurface Infiltration
- Infiltration Trench
- Surface Infiltration Basin
- Tree Filter
- Bioretention
- Biofiltration
- Biofiltration Planters
- Porous Asphalt
- Green Roofs
- Blue Roofs

**BWSC will consider other BMP types provided they meet the minimum criteria described Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook.**

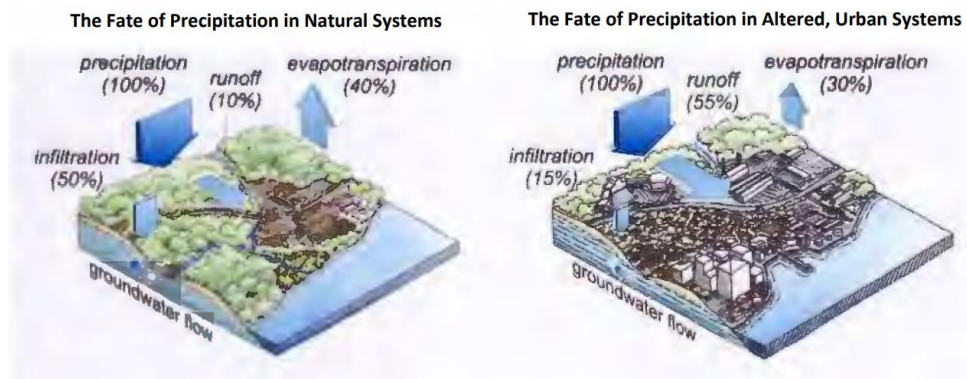
## EDUCATION CREDIT

Schools, faith-based organizations, after-school programs or other community organizations that host a program to educate K-12 students about stormwater using BWSC's approved educational materials are eligible for a **5%** stormwater charge reduction on their property upon completion of the approved curriculum. For school systems and organizations with multiple locations, each location must host their own program to receive a credit. The applicant will be required to provide documentation of their program, including the number of attendees, number of events, and photos. **The education credit is valid for 1 year from the date of acceptance, at which time the applicant must reapply for the credit.**

Once approved, your credit will appear on your bill and made retroactive to the date your application was submitted.

BWSC's approved curriculum can be found at <https://www.bwsc.org/environment-education/teachers-students>

Pictured: Figure from BWSC's Stormwater curriculum



## ELDERLY AND DISABILITY DISCOUNTS

BWSC offers a **30%** monthly discount to residential homeowners who are 65 years of age and older, or fully disabled and living in a 1-4 family residential dwelling. This discount applies to their monthly water, sewer and stormwater charges. Condominiums are not eligible.

If you currently receive this discount on your water and sewer charges, the discount will be automatically applied to your stormwater charges, without needing to submit a new application.

For more information, visit <https://www.bwsc.org/residential-customers/billing-info-and-assistance>

## Credits and Discounts Can Be Combined

Applicants may apply for multiple credits to further reduce their stormwater charge. The BMP credit, Education Credit, and Elderly and Disability Discount may be combined to achieve a **40%** maximum reduction in the stormwater charge.

## Other Ways to Reduce Your Stormwater Charge

### IMPERVIOUS AREA REDUCTION

*Disclaimer: Not a part of the stormwater credit program*

All Non-Small Residential Property (NSRP) owners may apply for this reduction. To be eligible, the applicant must provide evidence of the impervious area removed from their property. If so established, the applicant's stormwater charge will be re-calculated based on the reduced impervious area.

Removing impervious area helps reduce your demand on the stormwater system. You can capture additional stormwater runoff and further reduce your demand by using best management practices (described above).

#### Example: Impervious Area Reduction

1. Applicant provides evidence that structures were removed from their property.
2. BWSC staff member reviews application and adjusts applicant's impervious area.



Before



After

3. Applicant's ERU recalculated using new impervious area (1 ERU= 2,164 sq ft).

	Before	After
Impervious Area (sq ft)	13,021	10,685
ERUs*	7	5

\*Number of ERUs rounded up to the next whole number