



Frequently Asked Questions About Drain Maintenance Assessments



Dear Monroe County Property Owner:

I am hopeful that this flyer will answer many of your questions regarding Drain Special Assessments. You may be interested to know that Monroe County has over 1,100 designated county drains; more drains than any other county in the State of Michigan.

Each drain is within a drainage district. Each district drains to Lake Erie. If you own a home, a farm, or a business, your actions impact the environment and water quality. If you have additional questions after reading this flyer or if you are interested in learning more about our stream protection programs, please feel free to call my office for more information.

*Sincerely,
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Q. What is a Drainage District?

A. A drainage district is a legally established area of land that drains water from the landscape to a common outlet. Drainage district boundaries rarely correspond to political boundaries such as townships or counties.

Q. What is a Drain Maintenance Special Assessment?

A. County drainage districts are separate public corporations with their own financial records. Each drainage district is supported by a drain special assessment that covers the cost of maintaining the drainage system. County drains are not maintained by Federal, State, or Monroe County general fund taxes. You receive an assessment if we have performed work on your local county drain.

Q. Where is the storm drain for which I am being assessed?

A. The Monroe County Drain Commissioner's Office has maps and aerial photos that show the location of your property and the county drain that serves the drainage district. These documents will be available on the **Day of Review**. Even if your property does not touch the county drain, storm water from your land flows to the county drain. (If you think that this is not the case, inform the Drain Commissioner's Office before the Day of Review so that your claim can be verified.)

Q. Why might I receive more than one Special Assessment notice?

A. Each notice informs you of a drain special assessment for a different drainage district. Your property can be in multiple drainage districts because storm water moves from a smaller drainage system to a larger one. For example, if your property is located in a small drainage district that is "nested" inside a large one; you could receive an assessment for each district.

Q. Is this the only way I would receive multiple Drain Assessments in one year?

A. No. Water may flow from your property in more than one direction to different drains and drainage districts, and all of those drains are assessed when the work is performed.

Q. How are Drain Assessments determined?

A. The law requires that drain assessments be based on benefit derived as determined by the Drain Commissioner. All properties within the drainage district are assessed based on contributing acres and other factors.

Q. Do all property owners pay Drain Assessments?

A. All property owners within a drainage district receive an assessment, unless specifically exempted by law. In addition, the municipalities, the County of Monroe, the Monroe County Road Commission, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (when appropriate) also receive an assessment for a portion of the maintenance costs. The Michigan Drain Code does not exempt non-profits or religious properties from assessments.

Q. What is a Day of Review of apportionments?

A. This is a time when you are invited to review the records of maintenance efforts and costs for providing your land with storm water drainage and to discuss your proposed share (apportionment) of these costs. This is also a time to inform the Drain Commissioner's Office of additional maintenance issues.

Q. What if I cannot attend the Day of Review?

A. If you are unable to attend a scheduled Day of Review and have questions regarding your assessment or the assessment process, please call the Monroe County Drain Commissioner's Office prior to the Day of Review. It is possible to make an appointment at a time other than the day of review, although the appeal period begins after the day of review.

Q. What happens if I disagree with the proposed assessment for my property?

A. An appeal of a drain special assessment may be made to the Monroe County Probate Court within ten days after the Day of Review.