



INDUSTRIAL WASTE PROGRAM

Clean Water – A Sound Investment

Fees



King County

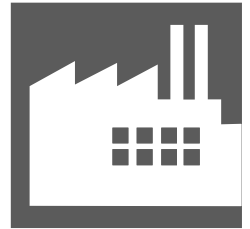
King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Wastewater Treatment Division

Industrial Waste Program

This brochure serves to explain the sewer-user fees and special charges associated with commercial and industrial discharges into the King County sewerage system.

Listed below are some general explanations of the fees King County assesses to the users of its sewerage system. Fee descriptions are followed by frequently asked questions and answers about the special fees and charges assessed to operations discharging industrial waste into the King County sewerage system.

This brochure does not cover special fees, taxes, and charges that your local sewer or water district might levy, however. Questions concerning those fees should be referred to your district.



Types of Fees

The following fees are collected for or by King County:

- ◆ **Sewage treatment charge:** This charge recovers King County's costs for transporting and treating sewage, and building and maintaining the sewerage system. Your local water and sewer district collects the charge, which is assessed on a residential customer equivalent of 750 cubic feet (or 5,610 gallons) a month.

- ◆ **Capacity charge:** King County levies this fee for all new residential, commercial, and industrial connections to the sewerage system. The fee is billed directly by King County and paid over a 15-year period.
- ◆ **Waste discharge permit fee:** The permit fee is designed to recover costs incurred by King County for drafting and issuing a waste discharge permit. King County collects the permit fee directly from the permit applicant.
- ◆ **Discharge authorization fee:** This fee recovers King County's costs for drafting major and minor discharge authorizations. Because it takes less time to draft, the fee for a minor discharge authorization is less than a major discharge authorization.
- ◆ **Letter of authorization fee:** This fee recovers King County's cost for drafting a letter of authorization.
- ◆ **High-strength surcharge:** Industrial or commercial facilities that discharge waste having a biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) greater than 300 mg/l or a total suspended solids (TSS) greater than 400 mg/l pay for King County's cost to treat this high-strength waste.



**This information is available in
accessible formats upon
request at 206-263-3000 (voice)
or 1-800-833-6388 TTY.**



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Q: When do I need a meter to monitor my sewer outflow, and where do I get one? How much does it cost, and whom can I call to find out if I need one?

A: Sewer bills are normally based on the water delivered to the business. If your industry has water processes where a significant amount of water is lost through evaporation or exempt meters are impractical, you might consider having your sewer charges based on a sewer meter read by your district. The district must approve installation of a sewer meter, so you should call them for a list of approved meters. Your company would pay for the meter and its installation.

Want more information?

If you would like additional information about sewer-user fees or special charges, please call King County's Industrial Waste Program at 206-263-3000.

The surcharge is a company-specific monthly charge billed by the local district and based on the actual poundage of BOD and TSS discharged to the sewer.

- ◆ **Monitoring charges for heavy metals and fats, oils, and grease (FOG):** Industrial or commercial facilities that have been issued waste discharge permits and are monitored for heavy metals or FOG pay these monitoring fees to cover the cost of King County's administrative, monitoring, and laboratory costs. The fees, which are company specific and based on the volume of industrial wastewater discharged to the sewer system, are collected monthly by the local districts.
- ◆ **Post-violation inspection and monitoring program:** Companies with discharge or permit violations are subject to this charge, which recovers King County's expenses for the additional monitoring and enforcement activities necessary to ensure a company's return to full compliance. King County bills the violating company directly for the charge.
- ◆ **Fines:** Companies with discharge or permit violations are subject to fines of up to \$10,000 a violation per day. Dischargers are also liable for any damages and additional costs caused by their discharge. King County bills the violating company directly for all fines and damages.

Questions and Answers

Listed below are frequently asked questions and answers about King County's fees:

Q: *How do I pay my fees?*

A: Send a check (payable to King County Department of Finance) at the address shown on the invoice you receive from King County's Department of Finance.

Q: *What fees do I pay to my sewer and water district?*

A: Your local sewer and water district collects the charges for sewage treatment and will also collect for the high strength surcharge and/or monitoring charges if your company is subject to them.

Q: *Do the local sewer and water districts need to charge sewer fees if the wastewater doesn't go through a meter?*

A: Yes. Sewer charges have to be paid for all water discharged to the sewer system, except stormwater in combined sewer areas.

Q: *How are sewer charges calculated if the sewer charges are not based on a sewer or water meter?*

A: In special circumstances approved by your sewer and water district and King County, sewer charges may be based on the volume of batch discharges, calibrated pump runs, or some similar arrangement.

Q: *What is King County's legal authority for charging fees?*

A: Both state and federal laws and regulations authorize King County to recover the program costs related to the various fees. The King County Council has officially sanctioned these fees through King County Code 28.84.060.

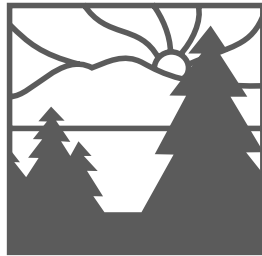
Q: *If my sewer charges are based on water use, what do I do if a significant amount of the water is going into my product? (This question would apply to a softdrink bottler or food-products manufacturer.)*

A: If you have water going into your product, you should contact your district to install an exempt water meter. The district must approve the siting of such meters since their meter reader will be reading the meter. The districts normally have lists of the meters they will approve for exemption purposes.

Post-violation charges and fines can also be appealed. King County Industrial Waste includes a copy of the appeal procedure with each enforcement action.

Q: *Is any company or site exempt from fees?*

A: There is no exemption from the payment of King County's fees. They apply to all dischargers, including government agencies.



Q: *Why are one company's fees the same as another's when their permit or discharge authorization is good for only two years instead of five?*

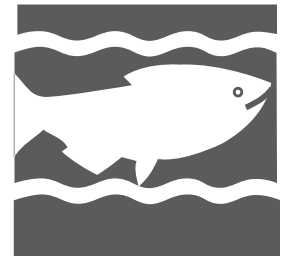
A: Normally, permits and discharge authorizations are valid for a maximum of five years. In some cases, however, discharges that may not last that long are issued permits or discharge authorizations for a shorter time. The fee itself is based on the average time required to draft the permit or discharge authorization. Since permits or discharge authorizations lasting less than the maximum time take the same time to draft, the fees are the same as a normal permit or discharge authorization.

Q: *Can King County bill customers directly for sewer charges without going through a local sewer and water district? What are the rules for this?*

A: Under special circumstances the district may choose not to bill for sewage treatment, such as when a company discharges directly into a King County trunk sewer without going through the district's system first. In that case King County Department of Finance will bill the discharger directly.

Q: *Is there a minimum volume that can be billed? Can a district decide the volume is too low to make the billing worthwhile?*

A: Districts normally have minimum monthly sewer bills for all the accounts serviced by their meter readers. When the billing is based on a volume reported by the discharger, a district or King County can opt not to levy a charge if the revenue is less than the cost of billing. For example, King County does not bill for surcharge or monitoring charges if the revenue is less than \$20 annually. King County's recommended minimum volume for billing one-time-only discharges is 10,000 gallons.



Q: *When do I pay the permit, discharge authorization, or letter of authorization fee? Can I pay it before I get an official bill from King County?*

A: Normally, you should wait until you get an invoice from King County's Department of Finance before you pay a permit, discharge



authorization, or letter of authorization fee. If there are special time constraints involving your discharge, it is possible to speed up the fee payment. State and federal regulations have deadlines for the issuance of waste discharge permits. Those deadlines remove any advantage for early payment; King County's normal processing procedures are arranged so that a permit is issued in the shortest possible time.

Q: *What are King County's various fees? In other words, how much will it cost me?*

A: The insert in this brochure shows all of King County's current fees. Normally King County's fees are adjusted each year.

Q: *If I have any billing questions, whom should I call at my district about my water and sewer bill?*

A: Your utilities bill lists a phone number to call for questions. If no number is shown on your bill, check your local phone directory for the rates and billing section of your local utility.

Q: *What should I do if my company makes process changes that alter the characteristics of the wastewater?*

A: Call the person at King County Industrial Waste you normally work with - usually an investigator or specialist is assigned to each company. If possible, contact Industrial Waste before altering your discharge. This is especially important if you are paying the high-strength charge, since the charge is based upon the levels of BOD and TSS in your discharge.

Q: *What fees can I appeal?*

A: The waste strength assigned to your company for the high strength surcharge can be appealed. If you believe the waste strength assigned to your company is incorrect, ask for a resampling or, using proper procedures, collect your own samples, analyze them and present the data to King County.