

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

How is the utility development review fee calculated?

The fee is based on the amount of affected area associated with your permit. The affected area is a way to determine the amount of work performed, which includes determining the amount of interior work and exterior work. Aspen Municipal Code Section 25.12.025. The affected area is then translated to a fee according to the table below:

| Utility Development Fees | 2023 Rate |
|---|---|
| Projects with 0 to 200 Sq. Ft. of Affected Area | \$270.00 |
| Projects with 201 to 5,000 Sq. Ft. of Affected Area | \$1.62/sq. ft. |
| Projects of 5,001 to 15,000 Sq. Ft. of Affected Area | \$1.62/sq. ft. for 1st 5,000 sq. ft. + \$1.35/sq. ft. thereafter |
| Projects with more than 15,000 Sq. Ft. of Affected Area | \$1.62/sq. ft. for 1st 5,000 sq. ft. + \$1.35/sq. ft. for next 10,000 sq. ft. + \$1.24 sq. ft. thereafter |

How is the utility development review fee different from the utility investment charge?

The **utility review fee** recovers costs associated with reviewing your permit for our water utility.

These costs include but are not limited to fixture counts performed to determine utility permit connection fees, site plan review including line sizing and location, reviews to ensure compliance with our water efficient landscaping standards, reviews to ensure compliance with water utility agreements and easements, and associated inspections with the permit.

These costs include, but are not limited to:

- Water fixture counts performed to determine utility investment charge
- Site plan review including line sizing and location
- Reviews to ensure compliance with:
 - Our water efficient landscaping standards
 - Water service agreements
 - Any existing or proposed raw water agreement
 - Water utility easements
 - Water rights and use of secondary water sources
 - The city's cross connection control program regulations
- Ongoing site inspections for compliance with irrigation and landscaping plans
- Reimbursement of costs associated with water attorney research and filings
- Final walk through prior to issuance of CO to ensure correct water fixture count and the adopted water efficient landscape ordinance
- Any other reviews and site inspections that may be associated with this permit

The **utility investment charge**, ((UIC), recovers certain capital costs allocated to new and expanded customers. The charge is based on the Equivalent Capacity Unit (ECU) rating and billing area factor for that account. Utility Investment charges are one-time fees assessed to new customers connecting to the water system or existing customers increasing their demand on the system.

The fees are collected from new or expanded commercial and residential water customers and allow the new or expanded customers to “buy-in” to the remaining water capacity that the City of Aspen Water Utility has available. The Utility Investment charge also helps fund large-scale water system capital improvement projects such as water treatment plant expansions, upsizing water transmission mains, and water line extensions that are necessary to keep pace with future economic development and growth in Aspen’s Water Service Area.

What is an ECU? An *Equivalent Capacity Unit (ECU)* is a unit of measurement that reflects that part of the capacity of the water system necessary to serve a standard water customer. Multiples or fractions of ECUs are assigned to each type of standard water fixture, (e.g. sinks, toilets, hose bibs, etc.), according to the schedule provided in Municipal Code Section 25.08.090 to estimate the potential water use capacity of each type of fixture. Overall fixture counts are performed on every connection to the City’s potable water distribution system to calculate the total ECUs on each account to provide the Utility and the Customer with potential, and expected, water use estimates.

How do I receive credit for past UIC payments for remodel and rebuild projects and why are additional UICs based on a dollar paid basis rather than on an inventory of ECUs that currently exist on the property? The history of past payments applicable to a property that is proposed to be rebuilt or substantially remodeled is reviewed in determining the amount of credit available to a particular property. Credits are available based on the dollar amount previously paid as set out in Section 25.12.070 (c) of the Municipal Code. For properties that were developed prior to 1985 the actual fees paid to cover all the costs of buying into the system, as described above under “Utility Investment Charge”, are generally negligible. The allowance for credits is limited to the amount of the charge actually paid in order to allow the City to recover the capital costs that were not charged at the time the structure was initially connected to the water system. Note: When the extent of the project results in increasing the ECU rating by less than 50% (not a “substantial remodel”), the available credit is based on the existing ECU rating of the existing structure(s).

Two additional UIC items to consider:

1. The “investment charge” typically applies to the cost of infrastructure at the time of development. Meaning as construction costs escalate and owners reconstruct at a later date, their incremental share of the “investment charge” will likely be higher.
2. Rationale for Minor Remodel vs Substantial Remodel credits --
 - a. administration time and burden on both the applicant and staff.
 - b. A “minor” remodel has small or negligible impact to the existing utility infrastructure and therefore the associated charge reflects a smaller system impact.

Additional Information:

Website: aspen.gov/Water

Email: utilities@aspen.gov

Utilities Department Phone: 970-920-5110