

Administrative Service Fee

Annual Administrative Service Fee.

Under 11 AAC 05.010(a)(8)(M) an annual administrative service fee for each appropriation of water for which a permit, certificate, or an authorization for temporary use of water has been issued is \$50 per year. However, the following uses are exempt from the annual administrative service fee:

- a permit or certificate authorizing the use of 500 gallons or less per day for all uses;
- a permit or certificate authorizing domestic use of 1,500 gallons or less per day for one single-family residence or duplex;
- a reservation of water under AS 46.15.145.

Why an annual administrative service fee?

The administrative service fee helps pay for the following administrative services:

- Update water right records in an online database for use as a management tool and public record source. This system contains data on customers, water right status, water source (well depth or water body name), type of water use, amount of water, period of water use, water right priority date, and property description (meridian, township, range, section, quarter sections, latitude and longitude, subdivision name or survey number, tract, block, and lot). Currently, the water right database has over 24,000 records.
 - Update water source locations on the state's online mapping programs for use by the department and the public.
 - Respond to complaints from the public and government agencies regarding water use and misuse.
 - Administratively handle complaints and appeals regarding the protection of prior water rights.
 - Collect and monitor specific data, such as water use records, stream gage data, water level records, well logs, as-built plans, and specifications.
- Assist the Department of Law with appeals to the Superior Court on water resource management issues and water rights.
 - Provide driller's well logs for inclusion in the online water well log database. Currently, the water well log database has over 30,000 records.
 - Conduct coastal zone consistency reviews, to assure that the appropriation and use of water is consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program.
 - Work with potential water users prior to filing water right applications to ensure that water right holders and water resources are not harmed by their proposed activity (examples: Pebble Gold and Copper Mine, Chuitna Coal Mine, Donlin Creek Mine, Blue Lake Hydroelectric, Cooper Creek Hydroelectric, Falls Creek Hydroelectric, Nikaitchuq Offshore Oil and Gas Project, The Ranch Subdivision, and Meadowbrook Subdivision).
 - Participate in site-specific water resource planning and review (examples: state area and management plans, federal land management plans, wildlife refuge plans, recreation plans, and groundwater task forces).
 - Conduct or assist in hydrologic and water use data collection for specific areas not related to a water right request but to an area of water management concern.

The fee has become necessary as the state legislature has directed the Department to find other sources of revenues to replace general funds. Program receipts are collected from the individual beneficiary of a program, and the funds collected are used to administer that program for the benefit of the water right holders and the general public.

Why a \$50 fee for the work listed above?

The revenues generated will offset budget cuts and allow us to improve the administration and management of Alaska's water resources. It has been determined that the collection of a fee less

than \$50 is not economical due to the cost of sending a bill and receipting a payment. It is also a fact that of the permits, certificates, and authorizations subject to this fee, not all of them will receive \$50 worth of work each and every year. Some of the files will require only minimal work. The fee helps pay for the administrative, management, and technical assistance by which the water right system supports the economy of Alaska and its development.

Why the exemptions to the fee?

It is not in the state's best interest to impose the fee on an individual or group that has reserved water for instream flows to protect fish and wildlife and public recreation opportunities.

The exemption to the fee for appropriations of 1,500 gpd or less for one single-family residence or duplex is based on the fact that time spent on administrative work associated with this type of use is, on the average, a lot less than on permits, certificates, and authorizations issued for other types of water uses. Water use for a single-family residence or duplex is a very stable water use – the type of water use and the location of water use rarely changes, and the source of water is normally uncontroversial due to the amount of water required. The Department purposely structured this exemption for domestic water uses such as lawn and garden, domestic livestock, greenhouses, and other water-related household amenities. The water well log data obtained from the many single-family residences is a valuable source of hydrologic information that is incorporated into an online database shared by state, federal, and municipal agencies, and used by the public and private sectors. The cost of this type of data collected, if it were not collected through the water right application process, would cost much more than the monies collected through an administrative service fee.

In short, the Department of Natural Resources has structured this fee to be fair to all water right appropriators of the state and has considered the economics of collecting a fee, in providing the above exemptions to the fee.

Where can I get more information?

More information is available in the Department of Natural Resources' fact sheets on Water Rights in Alaska, Dam Safety in Alaska, Reserving Water for Instream Use, Federal Reserved Water Rights, and Alaska Hydrologic Survey. Further information and application forms may be obtained from the

following offices or visit

dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/water/.

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Water Resources Section**

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