

1. What is a drain assessment?

Answer:

County drainage districts are separate public corporations with their own financial records. Each drainage district is supported by a Drain Assessment that covers the cost of maintaining the drainage system. County drains are not maintained by Allegan County general fund taxes.

2. What is a drainage district?

Answer:

A drainage district is a legally established area of land that drains to a common outlet. Drainage district boundaries are determined by the natural topography of the land and rarely correspond to political boundaries such as townships or counties. Common words for drainage district include watershed and drainage basin.

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

Answer:

The Allegan County Drain Office has maps and aerial photos that can show the location of your property and the county drains within 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 flows toward this county drain as an outlet regardless of the land's elevation.

4. Why did I receive more than one special assessment notice?

Answer:

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 smaller watersheds through larger watersheds, ultimately discharging to the Great Lakes. For example, if your property were located in a small watershed that is "nested" inside a larger watershed, you would receive an assessment for each district, should they both be assessed in the same year.

5. Is this the only way I would receive multiple drain assessments in one year?

Answer:

No. Water may flow off your property in more than one direction to different drains and drainage districts and all of those drains may be assessed in one year.

6. How are assessments determined?

Answer:

The law requires that assessments be based on benefit derived as determined by the Drain Commissioner. All properties within the drainage district are assessed considering factors such as size of the parcel, land use, proximity to the drain, and location of the property within the district. Drainage is considered as an interdependent system with the entire system benefiting from maintenance of the common outlet.

7. Do all property owners pay drain assessments?

Answer:

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

8. I recently purchased my property. Why am I being billed for work done prior to my ownership?

Answer:

Although the work for which you are being assessed may have been completed prior to your purchase of the land, the Drain Code requires that assessments be levied to the property, and assessed to the current owner of record. In most cases, the work performed will benefit the property for years to come.

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

Answer:

If you are unable to attend the Day of Review and have questions regarding your assessment of the assessment process, please call the Allegan County Drain Office.

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

Answer:

Appeal of the Drain Special Assessments may be made to the Allegan County Probate Court within 10 days after the Day of Review.