

State Water Resources Control Board

Water Quality Certification (WQC) Fees Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Why did I get an invoice?

An annual WQC invoice is sent to any person/entity who is enrolled in or permitted by a WQC and has an active discharge or post discharge monitoring requirements. The fee is assessed for the privilege of discharging waste that may affect the state's surface or ground water. California Water Code sections 13260 and 13269 allow the State Water Board to collect a fee to recover costs associated with the issuance, administration, reviewing, monitoring and enforcement of WQC.

2. How is the fee determined?

The fee is assessed based on criteria specific to each WQC discharge. The main discharge categories are described below. See the annual fee schedule posted on the Fee Branch website (address below) for a detailed list of all WQC fees.

Fill & Excavation Discharges – Flat application fee, a project fee calculated using impact area (both temporary and permanent impact), and a flat annual fee.

Dredging Discharges – Flat application fee, flat annual fee calculated using dredge volume (permanent and temporary) from previous year, and the current fiscal year fees per cubic yard.

Sand Mining Discharges. Ecological Restoration and Enhancement Projects, Emergency Projects Authorized by a Water Board GO and Low Impact Discharges – Flat application and flat annual fee.

This [Excel calculator](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/fees/water_quality/docs/dredgefillcalculator.xls) may be used to estimate WQC fees (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/fees/water_quality/docs/dredgefillcalculator.xls).

3. Why is my annual fee invoice amount different from the fee schedule amounts (except Dredging Discharges)?

Projects are invoiced annually beginning in the first fiscal year (July 1-June 30) following the date the certification is issued. However, the application fee you submitted as part of your initial application covers the first twelve (12) consecutive months of the project's certification. This means that most dischargers will be invoiced for a prorated annual fee

during the first year of billing unless your certification was approved July 1. Subsequent annual fee amounts, listed in the table below, will not be prorated. This does not apply to Dredging Discharges as annual active discharge amounts are determined based on actual volume dredged.

4. I sold my facility. Shouldn't the new owner be responsible for the invoice?

Not necessarily. If you sold your facility or operation, state law requires you to notify the regulating Regional Board in writing. Under law, the new owner must also notify the Regional Board that they are taking over responsibility for compliance with the WQC. The State Water Board is required to invoice the discharger named in the WQC and who is responsible for payment of the fee until the Regional Board transfers or reissues the WQC.

5. What do I do if the invoice does not belong to me?

Notify the Regional Board (phone numbers in the link below) that the invoice does not belong to you.

6. Is a fee still required if I am not discharging?

Yes. The fee is a requirement of the permit and is not based on the frequency or duration of your discharge. Since your WQC allows you to discharge waste as specified, you must pay an annual fee as long as your WQC remains in effect. You are required to report any material changes in your discharge to the Regional Board (phone numbers in the link below).

7. I will stop discharging mid-year. Will my fees be pro-rated?

No. You are subject to the full annual fee amounts regardless of whether your project is covered for the duration of the fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) or any portion of the fiscal year (e.g., one day during the fiscal year). To prevent future fiscal year invoices from being generated, please request a Notice of Project Complete Letter from the Regional Board by June 30th.

8. How do I terminate my permit?

If you are no longer discharging and think you should not be assessed future fees, you must request a Notice of Project Complete from the Regional Board. As appropriate and after you have complied with all laws and permit conditions, the Regional Board may determine that your WQC can be terminated. If terminated, you will not be assessed future fees, but you may still be required to pay current and past annual WQC fees.

9. Is interest accrued or is there a late penalty fee incurred on late payments?

The State Water Board does not assess interest or late payment fees. However, outstanding fees will be considered delinquent 30 days after the date of the invoice. Balances that remain outstanding 90 days past the date of the original invoice will be turned over to an outside collection agency.

10. Can I pay using a credit card?

Yes. Go to our website for more information and a link to the online EFT payment system: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/make_a_payment/. Upon completion of the EFT payment; include a copy of the receipt of payment with your WQC application.

11. Can I pay multiple invoices with one check?

Yes. You must indicate on the check the invoice numbers you are paying with that check.

12. How long do I need to wait before checking the status of my payment?

Please allow two weeks from the date of receipt for the State Water Board to process and post your payment. You may look up information on current and previous invoices, including payment status, on our Permit Fee Invoice Information search site: <http://infofees.waterboards.ca.gov/FeeInfo/DischargerInvoice.aspx>.

13. What is the State Water Resources Control Board's Taxpayer ID number?

The State Water Board's tax ID # is 68-0281986. A signed W-9 form can be found on the Fee Branch website at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/fees/docs/swrcb_w9.pdf.

State Water Resources Control Board – Fee Branch

Phone: (916) 341-5247

FAX: (916) 341-5248

Email: FeeBranch@waterboards.ca.gov

Website: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/fees/>

For questions about your permit contact the appropriate Regional Board:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/docs/staffdirectory.pdf