

Dear Shiawassee County Property Owner,

This brochure offers a basic explanation of the Drain Special Assessment process that pays for maintaining the storm drain systems in Shiawassee County under my jurisdiction.

A properly maintained drainage system is important to county residents and businesses for everything from crop production to keeping roads passable and minimizing flood damage. A routinely maintained system is more cost effective, avoiding the need for large, expensive drain projects often required to rebuild a system that has been neglected for years.

The Drain Special Assessment process begins with the Day of Review of Apportionments in which you as a property owner, are invited to review the records of maintenance efforts and costs for providing your land with storm drainage and to discuss your proposed share of those costs. This day of review also provides the opportunity for you to inform me and my staff of additional maintenance issues, helping us do a better job for you in the future.

If after reading this brochure, you still have questions about Drain Special Assessments, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

Respectfully,

Brent Singer

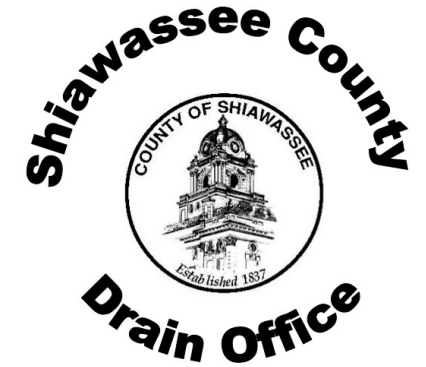
Shiawassee County Drain Commissioner

We are the Stewards of the Great Lakes



Water Facts

- ◆ The Great Lakes contain 20 percent of the world's available fresh water. Michigan has over 3,200 miles of shoreline on four of the five Great Lakes: Erie, Huron, Michigan, and Superior.
- ◆ Approximately half of Shiawassee County's surface water drains to Lake Michigan via the Maple and Grand River systems. The other half drains to Lake Huron via the Shiawassee and Flint River systems.
- ◆ The Shiawassee County Drain Commissioner maintains approximately 2,500 miles of open and tiled drains representing more than 500 county drains.



12 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DRAIN SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS

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12 Frequently Asked Questions About Drain Assessments

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

2. What is a drainage district? 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'm being assessed? The Shiawassee County Drain Office has maps and aerial photos that can show the location of your property and the county drain 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. How are assessments determined? The law requires that assessments be based on benefit derived as determined by the Drain Commissioner. All properties within the drainage district are assessed based on the size of the parcel (in the drainage district) and the land use that is assigned by the municipality. Distances from the drain or the location of the property within the drainage district are not factors. Drainage is considered as an interdependent system with the entire system benefiting from maintenance of the common outlet.

5. What is the difference between an apportionment and an assessment? Although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, the apportionment is a parcel's percentage of the total cost of the drain maintenance or drain project. The assessment is the dollar amount to be paid by the landowner on behalf of his or her parcel.

6. Do all property owners pay Drain Special Assessments? All property owners within a drainage district receive an assessment, unless specifically exempted by law. In addition, the municipality, Shiawassee County, the Railroads, and 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.

7. Why did I receive more than one Special Assessment Notice? 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 is "nested" inside a larger watershed you would receive an assessment for each district, should they both be assessed in the same year.

8. Is this the only way I would receive multiple Drain Assessments in one year? 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.

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

10. What is the purpose of the Day of Review?

The Day of Review is an opportunity for those being assessed to view the apportionment of benefits. This is also an opportunity for property owners to file a protest against their apportionment.

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

If you are unable to attend the Day of Review and have questions regarding your assessment or the assessment process, please call the Shiawassee County Drain Office. It is possible to make an appointment at times other than the Day of Review, although the appeal period begins after the date of the Day of Review.

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

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