

Frequently Asked Questions about Teton County's SOLID WASTE FEE

What is the Solid Waste Fee (SWF)? This fee is collected with property taxes to help cover the cost of the county's solid waste management system. The fee has been charged only to properties with homes or commercial buildings, accounting for about one-third of the properties in Teton County. The SWF has been \$105 per residence and 15 cents per square foot for commercial buildings. The 2014 tax bills reflected a significant one year increase in the SWF made necessary to help pay for repairs of the landfill cap. The SWF on the 2015 tax bills will be \$60 and will be charged to every real property parcel, regardless of whether there's a structure on the property.

How come I owe this fee now and not before? I own a subdivision lot with no structures on it, why do I have to pay? I own farm land, why do I have to pay? Every property owner is responsible for ensuring that the county's solid waste facilities operate safely and efficiently now and into the future, similar to the way that every property owner helps fund the roads and other public infrastructure. Collecting a SWF from every property will make it fair and equitable and allow the fee to be as low as possible. Although every property owner is now helping fund a portion of the cost of operating the transfer station, a large part of the budget is paid by those who actually use the facility through the user fee (tipping fee) that is charged when waste is delivered to the transfer station.

Was the public able to provide input? Yes, the Commissioners discussed possible changes to the SWF during three Board of County Commissioner meetings this year (June 17, July 13, July 27) before publishing the required legal notices and holding a public hearing on September 14. A town hall meeting will be held at 6:00 pm Wednesday, December 2 to provide more information about the Solid Waste Fee.

Why do I have to pay two fees for my property, just because it crosses a township boundary and was required to be treated as two parcels? It may be possible for you to consolidate your parcels into a single parcel with a single Solid Waste Fee. Contact the Planning Office at 354-2593 for more information.

Will the fee be charged to subdivision common areas? What will happen if the HOA fails to pay that fee? Every parcel, including common areas, will be assessed a \$60 Solid Waste Fee. If the SWF is not paid, the county will follow standard procedures for collecting past due taxes and fees.

Which state statute allows the county to assess this fee on my property? Idaho Code 31-870(2) allows the county to collect a solid waste fee via the property tax bills. ("The board of county commissioners may establish and provide for the collection of a solid waste fee in accordance with a request made pursuant to this section, and such fee shall be certified and collected in the same manner provided by law for the collection of real or personal property taxes.") In addition to the Solid Waste Fee collected with property taxes, Idaho Code 31-4404(2) allows the county to collect a tipping fee from users of the county's solid waste facilities.

What is the difference between property taxes and fees? Property taxes are calculated according to the value of the parcel as determined by the County Assessor, less any qualifying exemptions, and are specific to each parcel. A fee is a fixed amount charged to a certain category or type of parcel, or only to parcels within a specific taxing district.

How long will the Solid Waste Fee be charged to my parcel? This fee currently covers about 60% of the cost of the county's solid waste management system with the remaining 40% of the budget funded by tipping fees paid by those who use the facilities. The Solid Waste Fee will be an important part of the funding formula into the foreseeable future

You used to charge businesses by the square foot. How come this changed? The Solid Waste Fee is now being applied equally to every real property parcel. Home owners and businesses pay additional user fees (tipping fees) collected at the transfer station, proportional to the amount of trash they produce. The tipping fee is the only method of tracking trash production, thus people and businesses producing more trash will pay more.

I've never used the transfer station, how come I have to pay? This is the only facility in the county where trash can legally be processed, so everyone must use the facility. Every County in Idaho is required to have a solid waste management system. Every property owner benefits from the solid waste management system, similar to the way every property owner benefits from having roads, schools and fire protection, regardless of whether they use the services or not.

If I put my contiguous agricultural parcels together into one parcel, how long will the process take, and will I be able to create new home sites on the property for my family or someone else?
Will this affect my 2015 tax bill? It may be possible for you to consolidate your parcels into a single parcel with a single Solid Waste Fee, but any such consolidation will not affect your 2015 tax bill. The potential impact on possible new home sites will depend upon the circumstances particular to your parcels. A parcel combination process may take several months and must be completed by May 2016 in order to affect your 2016 tax bill. Contact the Planning Office at 354-2593 for more information.

If there is a process to contest this fee? No, this fee is required for all real property parcels and may not be contested.

Will Planned Unit Developments that have recorded plats but have not sold lots have to pay a per parcel Solid Waste Fee? Developments that have not sold lots or are defunct will have to pay the per parcel fee unless they vacate or combine parcels using the vacation or plat amendment process as outlined in the Title 9 of the Teton County Code. Contact the Planning Department for more details.