

FAQs – annual consent charges

Why do I have to pay charges for my consents?

All consent holders are required to pay annual charges that cover the cost of administration and monitoring of their consents, research and management, and compliance activities.

What are the administration charges for?

The administration charges recover the costs for maintenance of a consents database, collation of data, provision of expiry/reminder letters, responding to minor requests for information and meeting with consent holders to discuss matters relating to their consent(s).

Why am I being charged annual charges when I haven't started using my consents yet?

Annual charges are applied to all current consents regardless of whether or not they are being exercised by the consent holder. This is because you reserve the right to use a resource or carry out an activity, in turn limiting the chances for others to hold similar consents. If you have recently applied to renew an expiring consent, or have received a renewal consent since 1 July, the enclosed invoice covers your replacement consent for the coming year.

Can I get my consent placed on hold until I'm ready to start using it?

Consents are not able to be placed on hold.

Why have my annual charges increased since last year?

In line with our Long-term Plan 2021-2031 and following consultation during May/June, our fees and charges have been reviewed. Fees charged in the past have increased by a small amount each year and have not kept up with increasing costs. Fees and charges are set out in the 'Fees and Charges Schedule 2022-2023' which is available on our website at www.es.govt.nz/fees-and-charges, along with a document providing more explanation about the recent changes.

Why have I been charged for my current consent and also the replacement consent which I haven't started to use yet?

Annual charges are applied to all current consents. If you surrender your existing consent within one week of receiving your invoice and commence using your replacement consent, you may apply to us to consider remitting the annual charges on the surrendered consent. For more information on how to go about this, visit www.es.govt.nz/annual-charges or contact us.

Why am I being charged for science research and management on my water and discharge permits?

The charge is for all consents that benefit from the work undertaken by the science and monitoring programme.

For **now**
& **our future**



What's involved in Environment Southland's science programme?

Environment Southland monitors and gathers information about the quality and quantity of the region's air, coast, water and land resources to enable these to be managed for future generations. We carry out long-term monitoring, as well as short-term research and investigations where information gaps or potential problems are identified. We use the science information to inform policy and keep track of the environment.

We undertake:

- monitoring of river, lake, estuary and groundwater conditions;
- monitoring of groundwater and rivers to determine the amount of water available for allocation and to manage the reliability of supply for existing users;
- investigations of the values in water bodies to be managed including fish, macroinvertebrates (insects, worms and snails), aquatic weed levels, water quality and out-of-stream uses;
- monitoring of air quality;
- investigations and monitoring, to support policy development and the effectiveness of that policy.

Why do I have to pay science research and management charges on total consented amount, and not the amount I actually use?

The charges still apply if you are not using a consent. This is because you reserve the right to use a resource or carry out an activity, in turn limiting the chances for others to hold similar consents. If you are not using a consent and do not wish to pay the charges, you have the option of surrendering the consent. If you find you are using only part of a consent (i.e. your maximum allowed water take is higher than your actual use), you can amend the consent accordingly to reduce your costs.

How were the charges determined?

With a view to fairness, the Council carefully considered who the users are, and who benefits from natural resource use. Where appropriate, costs incurred for council activities that are carried out mainly to benefit consent holders are largely apportioned to them rather than the general ratepayer. Similarly, where only a part of the Council's work benefits consent holders, a corresponding proportion of the costs are charged back to them.

Where can I read more?

Go to www.es.govt.nz/annual-charges for a full range of forms and information. The current policy for the charges is set out in Environment Southland's Fees and Charges Schedule 2022-2023. This is available online at www.es.govt.nz/fees-and-charges.

**Please phone 0800 76 88 45 if you have any questions,
or send an email to service@es.govt.nz.**