

Your guide to resource consent charges

Resource consent charges

Waikato Regional Council recovers the cost of the majority of its Resource Management Act (RMA) functions by way of charges to applicants and consent holders. The council charges for all actual and reasonable costs incurred in assessing and processing a consent application, including the cost of staff time, contractors, scientists, councillors and commissioners. It uses a combination of fixed charges and additional charges for consent application processing. Each consent also attracts annual charges.

The annual charges are set through council's annual and long term planning processes. The most recent review of charges was completed June 2023.

This fact sheet is a summary of the charges that the council has set to cover consent processing, compliance monitoring and information gathering, research and data monitoring costs. You can find full details of the council's accounting policies and resource management charges in the current 2023/24 Annual Plan.

View online at: waikatoregion.govt.nz/summary-of-charges

Consent application charges

Council requires applicants to pay a \$1,000 deposit per application or a deposit of up to 50 per cent of the estimated costs of the council carrying out its functions in relation to such applications. This is deducted from the final processing cost of your application.

Fixed charges

Fixed charges are applied to consents where the council has historically found the costs do not vary much. This provides greater certainty to an applicant of what the costs are likely to be. The fixed processing charge is payable at the time the application is lodged. However, if this fee is found to be insufficient given the nature of the individual application, the council can seek to have the extra costs recovered. The following types of applications incur a single fixed application processing charge:

- construction of a well/bore (controlled activity)
- change to a mooring consent
- swing mooring inside a zoned mooring area
- transfer of resource consent or mooring consent.

Additional charges

A deposit is required for any other consent application. This amount can vary depending upon the scale and nature of the application.

While fixed charges are set at a level that is expected to cover the costs of most applications of that type, there are occasionally applications that are more complex and result in higher costs. In those situations, the council can seek to recover the additional costs.

If you feel that any additional charges incurred are not actual or are unreasonable, you may question the council about the charges. If you are not satisfied with the response, you then have the right to formally object to those additional charges. An objection must be lodged in writing and received by the council within 15 working days of receiving the invoice.

Annual consent holder charges

If an application for consent is granted, it will then receive an annual charge. The annual charge helps to cover the costs of administration associated with the provision of the council's consenting and compliance functions, as well as state of the environment (SOE) monitoring that the council undertakes to assess the environmental impact of resource use throughout the region. Annual consent holder charges vary depending on the scale and nature of the activity.

Consent administration charge

The annual resource consent administration charge contributes to the cost that the council incurs on undertaking its consenting and monitoring functions required under the Resource Management Act 1991. This includes maintaining consent and compliance information, updating consent status, processing consent surrenders and expiries, annual charge enquiries as well as general oversight of the consenting and monitoring activities of the council. This charge is the same for all categories of resource consent.

Consent compliance monitoring

We may monitor your activity to make sure you are complying with your consent conditions. You will be charged for staff time and material costs associated with this monitoring, such as:

- site inspections
- sample collection and processing
- data analysis
- auditing
- reviewing management and monitoring plans
- reporting on monitoring work undertaken.

The monitoring frequency will vary depending on the scale and nature of your activity or the type of resource being utilised. For example, an activity such as a discharge to air has the potential to significantly affect many people or the environment, and may be monitored several times a year. Activities such as small culverts may only be monitored once every five to 10 years.

We may also respond to any complaints or reports of noncompliance we may receive about your activity. If the complaint is justified, you'll be charged the full costs involved with our investigation.

Where a consent is held to take water for farm dairy purposes, a fixed annual monitoring charge of \$70 applies, which is included as part of the annual consent holder charge. This amount applies if monitoring determines that compliance has been achieved. If the consent holder is found to be non-compliant, additional compliance monitoring charges will apply. You will be directly charged for any costs, in addition to the \$70 monitoring charge, based on staff time and material costs.

Information gathering, research and data monitoring

Section 35 of the RMA requires the council to monitor the state of the whole or any part of the environment, and to undertake or commission research, to enable the council to effectively carry out its RMA functions.

Two thirds of the cost of this monitoring and science work is considered to be of benefit to, or needing to be undertaken in response to, the wider community and is funded through the general rate. One third is considered of benefit to, or needed to be undertaken in response to, consent holders and is charged accordingly.

Section 36 of the RMA allows the council to recover costs from consent holders in two situations. Where:

- the consent holder's activity causes an impact on the environment that needs to be monitored or researched by the council beyond the level that may have otherwise occurred, had the consented activity not occurred;
- a consent holder in some way receives benefit from council's science and information gathering work. This may not be a benefit, for instance, where the council undertakes monitoring or research on your property. The council work may be in the wider area where monitoring the cumulative impact of a number of consent holders is undertaken. For example, the council cannot monitor river flow at each water take location. But the work by the council enables the setting of allocation limits across all of the region and this enables consent holders to take some of the resource which is to the consent holder's benefit. It provides the evidence base needed for sound management of natural resources, and the information can be used by consent holders to prepare monitoring reports, help with future consent applications and meet conditions on their resource consents.

Where practicable, the council looks to optimise and coordinate its statutory SOE monitoring programme in a cost effective manner (as required under the Local Government Act) in order to avoid any duplicated monitoring that may be undertaken by consent holders or other organisations.

Remission

Under Section 36(5) of the RMA, the council has discretion to remit the whole or any part of any charge. Charges will be remitted where:

- charges to individual consent holders are deemed to be unreasonable
- a redress of relative benefits to the consent holder is necessary
- the information produced by an applicant for a resource consent benefits the community as a whole and reduces the need for council to undertake monitoring
- holders of consent category 'Land Use (Lake Taupō)' can demonstrate they are primarily a low nutrient discharging land use.

For further enquiries, please contact our Resource Use team on 0800 800 401.

Useful links

See [waikatoregion.govt.nz/consentforms](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/consentforms) for consent application forms.

See [waikatoregion.govt.nz/consentcost](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/consentcost) for information on charges and ways to reduce your application costs.

See [waikatoregion.govt.nz/environmental-indicators](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/environmental-indicators) for information on our environment.

