

Water Usage Around the Home



Where is most water within the home used?

- Toilets 30 per cent;
- Bathing, shaving and brushing teeth 35 per cent;
- Laundry and dish washing 20 per cent;
- Cleaning five per cent; and
- Cooking and drinking 10 per cent.

Did You Know?

- One drop per second may waste over 9,000 litres of water a year.
- Water running steadily through a 0.8 mm hole can waste about 680 litres of water in a 24-hour period.

Did You Know?

- A toilet tank water saving device only uses 16 to 23 litres compared to 18 to 27 litres without one. New low volume toilets use just 6 litres per flush.
- A five-minute shower uses about 100 litres but with a reduced flow showerhead only 35 litres.

Good Water Conservation Practices

Water usage around the home accounts for most of the water consumed in many communities. The amount of water used in each household depends on such factors as the number of water consuming appliances in the home, the amount of outdoor watering and personal water use habits.

Most of us do not give much thought to the water we use each day around the home. Yet household water use accounts for most of the water used in many communities.

We need to save water every way we can. If we don't conserve, we're pouring water and money down the drain. By changing some water-waste habits, repairing leaks and installing water saving devices, a significant amount of water can be saved in the home.

Detect and Fix Leaks

Leaks are the biggest water waster. Many homes lose more water from leaky taps than they need for cooking and drinking. Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. Leaky faucets are usually caused by a worn washer or O-rings.

Another simple method to determine if there is a leak in the home is to read your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the readings are different, you have a leak. Turn off all faucets and water-using appliances and make sure no one uses water during the testing period. Remember to wait for the hot water heater and ice cube makers to refill and for regeneration of water softeners. Check for leaks from pipe connections and plumbing fixtures. If you have a well, listen to see if the pump kicks on and off while the water is not in use. If it does, you may have a leak.

Install Water Saving Devices

Inexpensive devices are available for use on home plumbing fixtures. Many new fixtures already incorporate water saving devices into their designs. A reduced-flow showerhead will cut your hot water costs. An eight minute shower with a reduced-flow showerhead saves over 6.5 litres of hot water. That means annual savings of 14 per cent on water heating. Using a reduced-flow showerhead saves 7,500 litres of drinking water per year.

A dishwasher uses 40 to 54 litres (full cycle) and about 32 litres (short cycle).

Changing Habits: Indoor Water Use

In the Kitchen

- Dishwasher: Load dishwasher full before using it, use the short cycle or the water-saving cycle. Consider water use when purchasing a new dishwasher. New water and energy efficient models use 20 per cent less water. Scrape, don't rinse, your dishes before loading in the dishwasher.
- When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water and fill the rinsing sink to one-third or one-half full, avoid letting the water run continuously in the rinsing sink.
- Food Preparation: Put a little water in the sink and use a brush to clean fresh vegetables. Don't let the tap run needlessly. Cook vegetables in just enough water to cover the food, with a tight-fitting lid over the top. Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave, not under running water.
- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator. This will save running the tap until the water gets cool.
- Use your garbage disposal sparingly and start composting your kitchen waste.
- Install flow restrictors or aerators in faucets.



An automatic washer uses about 225 litres in the full cycle at top water level; while only about 95 litres is used during the short cycle with minimum water level.

Approximately 30 to 40 per cent of water used inside residential buildings is used for toilet flushing. Since toilets last approximately 15 to 20 years, about a 40 per cent reduction in water use in apartment buildings can be achieved by using a low-flush toilet. The water and dollar savings over the lifetime of the fixture are substantial.

A bathtub uses about 115 litres when more than half full; and 70 to 115 litres if one-quarter to one-half full.

By shutting the water off in the basin, about 3 litres is used compared to nine to 11 litres with the tap left running. Under 2 litres is used if water is used for rinsing only.

**For more information contact
Saskatchewan Environment
(306) 787-6504
or visit your water information
website at www.SaskH2O.ca**

In the Laundry Room

- Automatic Washer: Pretreat stains to avoid rewashing. Adjust your washing machine to use a minimum amount of water. Use the short cycle for lightly soiled clothes and use the “suds-saver” if your machine has this feature. Normal and permanent press wash cycles use more water. If load size cannot be set, operate the washer with full loads only. Consider energy and water efficiency when purchasing new laundry machines. Newer models use 40 per cent less water.
- Insulate the water heater and hot water pipes. Less water will run from taps before hot water flows. Avoid using hot water, when cold water will do.
- Install water-softening systems only when necessary. Save water and salt by only running the minimum amount of regenerations necessary to maintain water softness; turn softeners off while on vacation.

In the Bathroom

- Toilet: Install a water saving device in the toilet tank. Toilet water use can be cut by 40 per cent (depending on tank size) with a toilet tank dam or displacement bottle (capped plastic bottles weighted, filled with water). Since toilet flushing accounts for most water use in homes, flush only when necessary. Do not use as a garbage can.
- Install a low-flush toilet as they are designed to use six litres of water per flush, significantly less than the 23 litres of water that conventional toilets use. Water requirements in single-family residences is reduced by about 20 per cent and in multi-residential units by about 40 per cent.
- Check for toilet tank leaks caused by worn parts. Does the flapper valve or plunge ball “seat” properly? If not, replace the valve. Some leaks are silent, some produce a running water sound and others may be visible as a small trickle running from the rim to the water in the bowl. These leaks can often be found by simply listening to the toilet. A slight hissing sound may indicate water running unnecessarily. To detect silent leaks, remove the toilet tank lid and any coloured cleaning agents. Flush to clear water in the bowl, then add a few drops of food colouring to the tank. If the tank is leaking, colour will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. To avoid staining the bowl, flush as soon as the test is complete. Replace worn, corroded or bent parts.
- Shower shorter (5 minutes), use for rinsing only. Taking a shower rather than a bath saves several litres of water especially with a reduced flow showerhead.
- Bathtub: Partially fill; uses less water than a longer shower
- Basin: Use the stopper in the basin when shaving or washing. Fill the basin only partially full. Turn tap off when brushing your teeth.
- Faucet water use can be cut by 50 per cent with a low-flow faucet aerator.
- Replace leaky drain plugs in sinks and bathtubs.
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Make Every Drop Count

Reducing water waste in the home can be simple. Use these suggestions to make every drop count.