

Water Consumption in Canadian Homes

Overview

Although 70% of the planet is covered with water, freshwater makes up only 1% of the total water. From this 1%, only a tiny fraction is accessible for consumption. Canada is blessed with abundant freshwater supplies and high levels of water services. Nonetheless, Canadians consume large quantities of water compared to other countries. In fact, Canadians use more than twice as much water as Europeans!

How much water?

On average, a typical person consumes 335 litres of water daily, or the equivalent of 670 standard water bottles (500 ml size). Cooking and drinking does not exceed 10% of this amount. Bathing constitutes 35% of the daily water consumption, or about 234 bottles. Toilet flushing alone consumes the equivalent of 200 bottles, while laundry and cleaning constitutes 25% of the daily use, or about 168 bottles.

By the late 1990s, Canadian households were estimated to have consumed 7.9 billion litres of water *per day*. This amount is enough to fill the SkyDome five times!

Metering water flow and charging per volume used has helped reduce household consumption. On average, Canadians who were charged per volume used 70% less water than those who paid a flat fee. In 1999, around 44% of Canadians were charged a flat fee for water use, which did not provide an incentive for conservation.

Water conservation

Municipalities and water management authorities started to implement water conservation strategies. For instance, in 1993 Ontario became the first



province to introduce plumbing codes that require all toilets, faucets and showerheads in new buildings to be water conserving. It is estimated that 42% of households use low flow showerheads while 15% reportedly use water-conserving toilets.

The use of water in washing and cleaning consumes much more than drinking and cooking. Therefore, using simple techniques can save a lot of water. Remember the three R's (not for recycling, but for water conservation): **reduce** consumption, **repair** leaks and **replace** old fixtures with modern, water-saving ones.

Here are some simple ways to save large amounts of water in your house:

- Retrofit faucets and showerheads with tap aerators.
- Use a broom to clean the driveway instead of a hose.
- Water your garden early in the morning to avoid excessive loss by evaporation.
- Turn off the water tap when brushing your teeth.
- Use the laundry and dishwashing machines on full loads only.
- Take shorter showers. Reducing your shower time by 2 minutes can save 2,600 Litres per month!
- Check your toilet for leaks and retrofit with water-saving devices.

Main reference:



Environment
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