

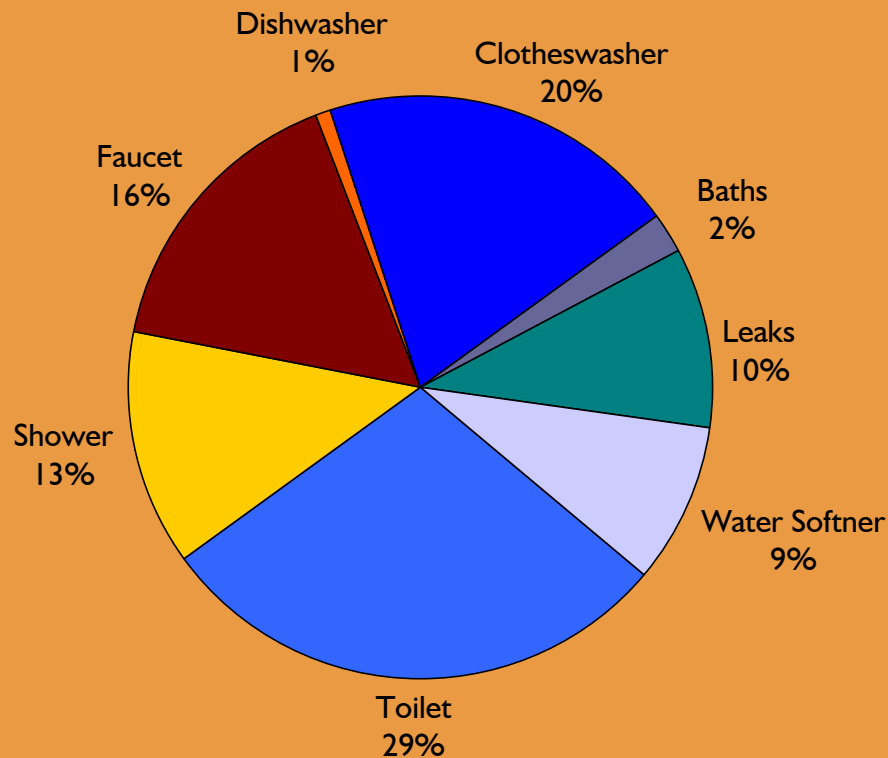
# Indoor Water Use

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The average Calgarian uses 500 litres of water per day. Water is a major limiting factor to our quality of life (and growth) in Calgary. As an arid city, with a relatively small supply of water, it is important that we use water to the best of our capabilities. If we combine several simple behavioural changes with a few small appliance upgrades it is possible to cut water use significantly. The following section will give recommendations on lessening our consumption of water, reducing the stress on our water shed and our water and sewage treatment facilities.

52% of water used in Calgary is for residential purposes. The remaining 48% is for industrial, commercial and institutional needs (34%), while 12% is lost to leakage and 2% is used by other communities.

In Calgary, residential water is used in this way:



## THE CHECKLIST

Question	Comment	Positive Action
Do you have low-flow shower heads (<2.5 gallons per minute/9.5 L per minute)?	Apart from the fact that clean, fresh water is an invaluable essential resource, we use energy from the power grid when we use water. Energy is needed to treat the water for drinking; to pump water to our homes; and again to retreat the water before it is discharged into our waterways. Hot water for showering is another energy cost that can be minimized through water efficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install low-flow shower heads in all bathrooms. These will pay for themselves in months in water and hot water savings. Switching from a 15 L per minute shower head to a 9.5 L per minute model will save you over \$40 per year.</li> </ul>

<p>Do you have aerators on your bathroom and kitchen faucets?</p>	<p>Faucet aerators force the air through tiny holes, using less water while maintaining the same pressure. This can reduce water use by up to 40%.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install facet aerators on all kitchen and bathroom aerators. Each \$4 aerator can save you \$34/year on your water bill alone. Factor in the hot water savings and the savings multiply.</li> </ul>
<p>Have you checked for leaks?</p>	<p>If your faucet is dripping at the rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste over 12,000 litres per year, even at 10 drops per minute you can expect to waste 2400 litres in a year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have a water meter check to see if water is passing through it when all taps and appliances – including ice trays, humidifiers, hot water heaters, and water softeners – have been turned off. Specifically, observe if the triangular lowflow indicator is moving. If so, this is an indicator that there is a leak in the home.</li> <li>• Replace the washers or seals in leaking taps.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you have a toilet leak?</p>	<p>The average family loses approximately 14% of their water usage through leaks, most commonly from their toilets. Toilet flappers are often responsible and should be replaced every 2 to 5 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check for toilet leaks by placing a few drops of food colouring in the tank and after 5 minutes check to see if the colouring has migrated into the bowl. If it does you have a leak. Replace the flapper.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you have low-flow (&lt;6 litres per flush) or dual flush toilets?</p>	<p>Toilets account for 30% of a houses water use. Low-flow models reduce water use by 60%, while dual flush models use up to 75% less water.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace old water-thirsty toilets with a more efficient model. A 6 L per flush model will save you \$80 per year, per toilet, while a dual flush model will save close to \$90 per toilet, per year.</li> </ul> <p>The City offers a rebate on these toilets for \$50.</p> <p>Check out the <b>Canadian Water and Wastewater Association</b> (<a href="http://www.cwwa.ca">www.cwwa.ca</a>): site for comprehensive toilet performance ratings.</p>
<p>Are you on a water meter?</p>	<p>90% of the City's customers that have switched from a flat-rate to a water meter have saved money. Those who conserve water stand to gain the most.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a water meter installed at no charge by calling 403-310-2010.</li> </ul>

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### Bathroom

- Don't use toilets as waste baskets;
- Fill your sink with water when shaving instead of running the water;
- Limit your showers to 5 minutes;
- Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth. Running water wastes about 19 litres a minute.

### Kitchen

- Wait until you have a full load before using the dishwasher. This conserves water, energy and detergent;
- Scrape food off of dishes instead of rinsing them. Let the dishwasher do the rinsing;
- Don't run the water continually when doing dishes by hand. If you have two sinks, use one for washing and the other for rinsing. If you only have one sink, rinse the dishes in a large pot or bowl;
- Wash veggies in a bowl instead of running water;
- Place drinking water in the fridge to cool it. This avoids having to run the tap to get cool water;
- Avoid using the garburator, which wastes water and increases the amount of sewage that has to be treated. Use a composter instead.

### Utility Room

- Wash full loads of laundry. If you must wash a small load, set the water-level accordingly;
- If you have a water softener, make sure it isn't flushing more often than needed. Set your water softener for Calgary's water hardness (the water hardness ratings are available through the City of Calgary);
- If water is draining from your water softener while the softener isn't recycling, you should have the softener serviced;
- If your furnace humidifier is an evaporator-type and the drainage is leaking, have it serviced. If the humidifier is a spray-type, the water should drain out of the line only when the humidifier is running. If it is still draining after the humidifier has stopped, have the humidifier repaired.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Autonomous & Sustainable Housing Inc.** ([www.ecobuildings.net](http://www.ecobuildings.net)): offer 1-hour long "guided tours" of a homegrown sustainable home in Calgary. The tours are for individuals (no groups allowed) and are offered on the last Saturday of each month (except holidays and long weekends) from 1PM to 4PM.

**Canadian Water and Wastewater Association** ([www.cwwa.ca](http://www.cwwa.ca)): the site has comprehensive toilet performance ratings.

**Health Canada – Drinking Water Chlorine:** speaks to the issues around drinking water chlorination and how to reduce exposure to chlorine and its byproducts.

**Water Footprint** ([www.waterfootprint.org](http://www.waterfootprint.org)): Demonstrates the water requirements for common consumer goods and food products.

**Water Wise (City of Calgary) Videos** ([www.calgary.ca](http://www.calgary.ca) – search ‘water wise videos’): a number of videos that demonstrate how to save water around the home.

## PRODUCED BY GREEN CALGARY

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Green Calgary offers a variety of programs to help achieve mandates of waste reduction and water protection including Environmental Education; Healthy Homes Calgary; Commercial Environmental Services (formerly Calgary Materials Exchange); EcoStore - selling environmental products that reduce our environmental footprint; Information Services & E-newsletter.

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