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FACTSHEET

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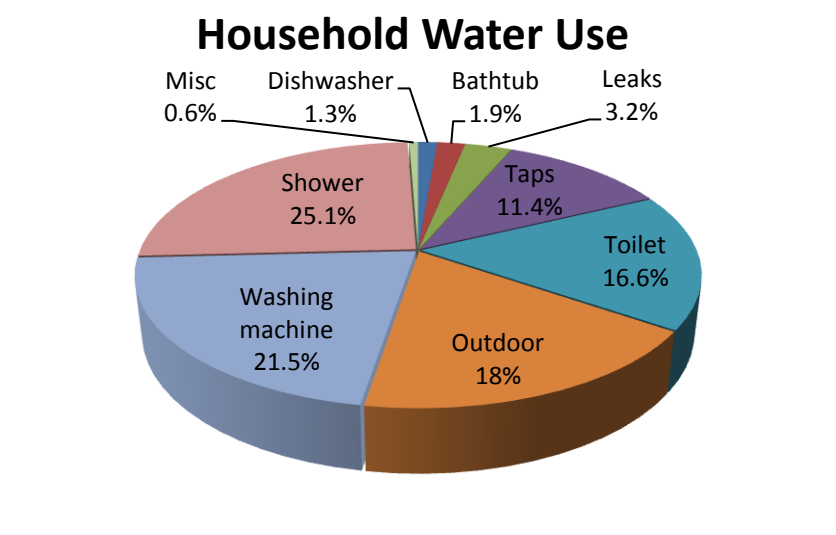
Factsheet: INDOOR WATER CONSERVATION

There are numerous ways water can be wasted around the house. To determine your water usage, go to the Water Use Calculator. The average water use is 250 litres a day and is proportionally shown in the graph below. How efficiently do you use water?



SIMPLE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO CONSERVE WATER

General

- Repair leaking taps and fittings.

Bathroom

- Do not leave the hand basin tap running while you brush your teeth or shave.
- When wanting hot water, turn the hot tap on full to get the hot water to come through faster.
- Take shorter showers. If you want to soak, a partially filled bath uses less water than a long duration shower.
- If the kids spend a long time in the shower, get them a waterproof timer set to 5 minutes.
- Single lever mixer taps save water by giving much better control.
- Buy new fixtures with built-in flow restricting devices rather than buying a standard fixture and adding a flow restrictor.
- Aerators fitted to taps reduce volumes by mixing the water with air.

To find out whether your shower head is wasting water, try this test:
Place a measuring jug directly under the shower head and catch all the water for exactly ten seconds. Multiply the water you have caught by 6 to get the amount of water you would use in a minute.

If your shower uses more than 10 litres per minute, you should consider installing a low flow shower head or restrictor available at your local plumbing or hardware store. The effect of changing from an 18 litres per minute shower head to a low flow shower head of 8 litres per minute is a decrease in volume from 90 to 40 litres used for a 5 minute period, which represents a 56% saving of water used in the shower.

Toilet

- Do not flush thoughtlessly or needlessly. Use the reduced flush facility if present.
- With a single flush cistern, place a brick or 1 litre plastic milk bottle filled with water in the cistern to reduce the amount of water used for each flush. With a ballcock cistern, bending the ballcock arm down lowers the filling level.
- Install dual flush toilets. This allows you to use only as much water as needed. Some older toilets only have full flush systems which can use 11 litres per flush. New toilets use as little as 3.5 litres! The effect of changing from full flush 11 litres to a water saving toilet of 3.5 litres represents a 68% saving of water.

INDOOR WATER CONSERVATION

- Other options include cisterns which fill through a spout where you wash your hands, giving the water coming into the toilet cistern a second use.

To find out whether your toilet is leaking water, try this test:
Add a few drops of food colouring in the toilet cistern. If the colour appears in the toilet bowl without flushing, the cistern components will require repair.

Laundry

- Use your washing machine for full loads only.
- Changing from a 2.5 star water efficiency labeled washing machine to a 4 star machine will provide a 39% saving in water used to wash clothes. If you are buying a new washing machine, consider buying a water saving frontload washer.

Kitchen

- Pre-rinse or hand wash your dishes in a plugged sink. Make sure your dishwasher is full before starting it.
- Rinse or wash vegetables in a plugged sink or bowl.
- In-sink waste disposal units use a lot of water and put unnecessary load on the wastewater system. The organic waste can be composted and used in your garden.
- Store drinking water in the fridge instead of running the tap until the water is cold.
- Single lever mixer taps save water by giving much better control.
- Aerators fitted to taps reduce volumes by mixing the water with air.
- Buy new fixtures with built-in flow restricting devices.

THINGS TO CONSIDER TO RENOVATING OR BUILDING

Plan your plumbing system to use water efficiently. For example the location of the hot water system is important. By minimising the distance between the source and the point of use, less water and time is wasted waiting for the water to reach the desired temperature. The efficient use of hot water will not only reduce water consumption but will have a corresponding reduction in your energy cost to heat the water.

Other considerations should include:

- Low pressure systems are cheaper and use less water.
- Specify flow rates and maximum levels of fluctuation for fixtures.
- Appliance and fittings Water Efficiency Labeling. Launched in April 2010, the Water efficiency Labeling Scheme requires all products in New Zealand to display their water efficiency rating by April 2011. For more information visit Labeling requirements and process [Ministry for the Environment]

Good sources for advice to ensure the most water efficient design and features are incorporated are:

- Your plumber, architect, designer.
- Your local building supply store.
- Hamilton City Council's Eco Design Advisor. For more information visit Sustainable buildings, Build Hamilton - environmentally sustainable buildings ecodesign

For more information go to www.hamilton.co.nz/smartwateruse.

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Hamilton City Council
Te kaunihera o Kirikiriroa