Showers

Many newer energy-efficient showerheads conserve energy and water without changing water pressure. Low-flow showerheads use up to 70 percent less water than standard showerheads. Some models offer adjustable spray patterns, non-aerating spray that reduces heat loss and increases comfort, self-cleaning features and even a spray pause valve. Showerhead flow restrictors, which may affect delivered water pressure, can also reduce water use by approximately 60 percent. Either type of head can save approximately 15 percent on the cost of heating your water.

Reducing the flow reduces water consumption and that can reduce your water and sewer bills as well as the treatment costs for municipal water and sewer services. For those on private wells and septic systems, there will be reductions in power consumption and demands placed on the pump, well, septic tank and leaching system.

To further reduce water consumption, consider installing a low-flow showerhead with a shut-off button or a single-handle shower valve with a pull-on and -off flow feature. The advantage of the shut-off feature is that it allows you to be very water efficient-you can interrupt the flow while you lather up or shampoo and then resume at the same flow rate and temperature.

In addition, many shower faucets now come with safety features such as pressure-balancing valves that help to keep the shower temperature constant should water be used elsewhere and anti-scald devices to prevent untempered hot water from flowing out of the head.

The flows from energy-efficient showerheads range from as low as 3.8 litres per minute (L/min) up to 9.5 L/min, with the most common around 5 L/min. These compare to older units at around 14 L/min. New showerheads can significantly reduce water consumption but also let you enjoy your shower! In many regions of Canada, local plumbing codes and bylaws require their use because of the inherent water savings.

You can also save more water and energy by taking quick showers instead of baths. You could reduce water consumption by about 50 percent depending on the type of showerhead used. For example, a five-minute shower with a 9.5 L/min showerhead uses about 47.5 litres of water compared to about 100 litres for the average (half-filled) bathtub. An inexpensive shower timer (for example, an hourglass or hand-crank spring timer) can also be installed in the shower to help monitor and reduce showering times. Even if you decide to take a slightly longer shower with a low-flow showerhead, you will still reduce your water and energy consumption.