

How Much Do We Use (or Waste)?

- 1 trillion litres of untreated sewage are dumped into Canadian waters every year by our 20 largest cities. (Sierra Legal Defense Fund).
- 160 waterborne disease outbreaks were reported in Canada between 1974 and 1999 – estimates are only one-tenth of the total number of disease outbreaks are actually reported. (Health Canada).
- In British Columbia, communities under ‘boil water advisories’ grew from 19 in 1986 to more than 300 in 2001.
- In Ontario, 645 municipal water plants failed to meet health standards in December, 2000.
- In Quebec, 542 water pollution advisories were issued in the year 2000.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, 302 ‘boil water advisories’ were issued in 2002, affecting 65,000 people.
- One-quarter of all bottled water is transported by train, boat and plane – burning massive amount of fossil fuels.
- Worldwide, 2.7 million tons of plastic are used annually to bottle water, with more than 85% of bottles becoming garbage, litter and filling up landfill sites.
- Globally, \$100 billion is spent each year on bottled water. The U.N. Millennium Development Plan to halve the number of people lacking access to safe drinking water by the year 2015 would cost \$15 billion per year.
- At the current rate of global warming melting Asian glaciers, within 50 years, 40% of the world’s population will lose their primary source of fresh water.
- Up to 60% of the human body is water; the brain is composed of 70% water, blood is 82% water, and the lungs are nearly 90% water.
- In Canada, 64% of freshwater is withdrawn for thermal power generation, 14% for manufacturing, 12% for municipal use, 9% for agriculture, and 1% for mining.
- It takes 39,090 gallons of water to manufacture a new car, including new tires.
- It takes 62,600 gallons of water to produce one tone of steel.
- It takes 1,851 gallons of water to refine one barrel of crude oil
- It takes 14 gallons of water to grow a medium-size orange (and bring it to market)
- It takes 48.3 gallons of water to produce one eight-ounce glass of milk (to feed the cattle, process it and bring it to market)
- It takes about 45% more water to make a slice of white bread than a slice of brown bread (added cost of extra processing to the flour to make white bread).
- Approx. 300 litres of water is required to produce 1 kg. of paper
- Approx. 10 litres of water is required to manufacture one litre of gasoline
- Approx. 60% of Canada’s fresh water drains north, while 85% of the population lives along the southern border with the United States
- The Great Lakes are the largest system of fresh, surface water on earth, containing roughly 18% of the world supply
- Daily activities water usage: washing hands 8 litres, brushing teeth 10 litres, toilet flush 15 – 19 litres, washing dishes by hand 35 litres, dishwashers 40 litres, tub bath 60 litres, 5-min. shower 100 litres, washing machine 225 litres
- Toilets (while consuming nearly one quarter of our municipal water supply) use over 40% more water than needed.
- Each year 3 to 4 million people die of waterborne diseases, including 2 million children, who die of diarrhea.
- North Americans use an average of 350 litres of water a day. A person living in sub-Saharan Africa gets by on 10 to 20 litres a day.
- Half of the world’s population still suffers with water services inferior to those available to the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Food for Thought: There is no new water in the world today; not a drop less or a drop more than 1 million years ago. We just keep recycling it.