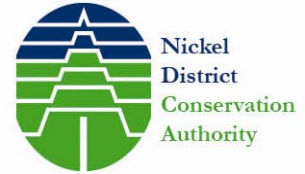


DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

ACT FOR CLEAN WATER



WATER MYTHS AND FACTS

As compiled by Environment Canada.

Myth: There is an unlimited supply of fresh water.

Fact: More than two-thirds of the earth's surface is covered by water – the volume representing almost 1 500 million cubic kilometres. About 94% of this water is found in the oceans, almost 6% is located underground and in glaciers, whereas rivers, lakes, soil moisture and atmospheric vapour, which constitute the major source of drinking water, account for a mere 0.0221% of the total volume!

Myth: Water conservation means water bans and doing without.

Fact: Water conservation doesn't mean cramping our lifestyles by doing without; it simply means reducing the amount of water we waste.

Myth: All municipalities have sewage treatment.

Fact: In 1996, 16% of Canada's urban population did not have any form of sewage treatment.

Myth: Very few toilets leak and those that do don't waste much water.

Fact: As many as 25% of all toilets leak. A toilet that runs on after flushing can leak at the rate of 20 to 40 litres per hour – that's 200 000 to 400 000 litres per year!

Myth: Automatic dishwashers waste water compared to washing by hand.

Fact: If you hand wash dishes twice a day, you use about 70 litres of water. If you fill the dishwasher to capacity once per day, you use only about 40 litres of water.

Myth: There's plenty of water in the summer, so conservation isn't as important.

Fact: The opposite is true. While water supplies tend to remain fairly constant from season to season, the *rate* at which people use water – primarily for watering lawns and landscaping – rises sharply in the summer. In fact, water demand nearly doubles in the summer, creating a peak demand problem and higher costs for the local water utility. Therefore, water conservation during the summer is crucial to avoid water rationing and keep costs down.

Myth: You use less water when you shower than when you have a bath.

Fact: This is not always the case. It depends on the length of your shower and the type of showerhead you have, as well as the amount of water in the bathtub. A six minute shower under a standard showerhead uses the same amount of water as a half-filled bathtub.

Myth: The best way to get rid of hazardous household chemicals is to pour them down the drain and let the sewage treatment plant deal with them.

Fact: You should *never* pour any toxic substance, such as old paint, paint thinners, or house and garden pesticides down the drain. The sewage treatment plant is designed to treat normal organic waste, not toxic substances. Therefore, these toxic wastes may impair the plant's ability to treat organic wastes.