

Step 5: Indoor Water Use

Once you have determined that water is not being lost to leaks, you can evaluate how much water is used in your household and determine where and how water use can be reduced.

If your showerheads have a flow rate of more than 2.0 gallons per minute (gpm), or if your kitchen and bathroom faucets have a flow rate of more than 1.5 gpm, then they are considered high-water-use fixtures. Follow these instructions to check the flow rates of all showerheads and faucets.

Measure showerhead flow rates:

1. Turn on the shower to its maximum flow.
2. Catch the full flow for 15 seconds in a bucket or wide-mouthed pitcher that has volume markings on it.
3. If using a bucket, pour the captured water into a measuring cup or quart jar.
4. If the total volume collected in 15 seconds is more than two quarts (64 oz.), then the shower flow rate is more than 2.0 gallons per minute.



Measure all bathroom and kitchen faucet flow rates:

1. Turn on the faucet to its maximum flow.
2. Catch the full flow for five seconds in a bucket or wide-mouthed pitcher that has volume markings on it.
3. If using a bucket, pour the captured water into a measuring cup or quart jar.
4. If the total volume collected in five seconds is more than two cups (16 oz.), then the faucet flow rate is more than 1.5 gallons per minute.



Step 5: Indoor Water Use *(continued)*

Measure toilet flush rates

To find the flush rate of your toilet, see the next page for instructions on “How to Check Your Toilet’s Flush Volume.” If you determine your toilet’s flush rate is 3.5 gallons per flush (gpf) or higher, consider replacing it with a high-efficiency toilet that uses 1.28 gpf or less.



Clothes washer

If your clothes washer is not a high-efficiency washer, please consider purchasing one. A standard clothes washer uses about 40 to 45 gallons per wash load. A high-efficiency washer uses about 15 to 25 gallons per wash load.




Dishwasher

A standard dishwasher uses 8 to 12 gallons per wash cycle. A high-efficiency dishwasher uses 5 to 7 gallons per wash cycle.



How to Check Your Toilet's Flush Volume

Flush volume refers to how much water is released when a toilet is flushed. Since January 1994 all toilets sold in the U.S. must use 1.6 gallons per flush (gpf) or less. More recently, high-efficiency toilets (HETs) with a flush volume of 1.28 gpf or less have been available. Older toilets use up to seven gallons per flush! There are several ways to find the flush volume of a tank-style toilet:


 The manufacturer's name and a "gpf" label often appear right behind the seat hinge on the bowl. If you don't see a gpf label, lift the tank lid and check the inside back of the toilet tank for the manufacturer's date stamp—it is usually stamped directly into the porcelain. The chart at right will help you determine your toilet's flush volume.

Special Note for HETs: HETs have been available on a limited basis in the U.S. since 1999, but have only been commonly available since about 2005. Some manufacturers of dual-flush HETs use the same 1.6 gpf bowl for their HETs as for their standard toilets. Thus the bowl stamp may show 1.6 gpf even though the toilet is an HET.

Year Toilet Was Manufactured

Gallons Per Flush

pre-1982	5-7
1982-1990	3.5
1990-1994	1.6-3.5
1994-present	1.6
~2005-present	1.28 HET (see note)

 If you can't find a date on your toilet, or if the date is between 1990 and 1994 (when both 3.5 gpf and 1.6 gpf toilets were sold), you can measure the water used during a flush. **Note:** To use the following method you first need to shut off the water supply valve at the wall behind the toilet. If the valve is stiff

and can't be turned off, try holding the float mechanism in the tank in the "up" position with a string or rubber band to keep the toilet from refilling while you are performing the following steps.

Special Note: If your toilet tank has a large black cylinder inside, rather than the standard flush mechanism, your toilet's maximum flush volume is 1.6 gpf or less. The flush volume is usually printed on the cylinder.

