

more difficult. Bizarrely, the water companies often don't know how much is used within households. This is because whilst they know how much they supply into their distribution network, an unknown amount is lost to leakage during distribution. Depending on which technique is used to calculate leakage, different results are obtained, but the regulator's (OFWAT) estimate for total leakage during supply in 2002/2003 was 3625 mega litres per day (that's 127 litres/property/day!).

You can work out where your water goes by doing a water audit in which you consider all your water-using appliances and how often you use them to give you a total water use, as shown in the box below. You may well find that simply by measuring your water use and thinking about the issues a little more, you will naturally start using less water, so carrying out an audit can be an excellent water efficiency measure in itself.

Calculating your water use

The amount of water that an appliance uses varies considerably according to the manufacturer, and the following are estimates of the average UK situation. Simply work out how many times you use each appliance each week, multiply it by the figure for litres/use in the second column and add up the totals.

Appliance	Litres/use	Uses/week	Total water consumption
Toilet	10	¹	
Shower	35 ²		
Power shower	100 ²		
Bath	80		
Washing machine	70		
Dishwasher	35		
Drinking/cooking (per day)	5-10		
Washbasin	5		

Table 1.1 Calculating your water use.

¹ Toilet flushes per week can be estimated from (25 x residents) + (15 x daytime occupants).

² Showers and power showers have a wide variation in their water use per minute, and clearly the actual water use will depend upon how long you spend in it. It is recommended that you measure how much water your shower uses in a minute if you want to improve the accuracy of your audit.

If you are interested enough to plumb in your own flow meters within the home, you can substitute your own numbers for the numbers of litres per use of an appliance in the table above.

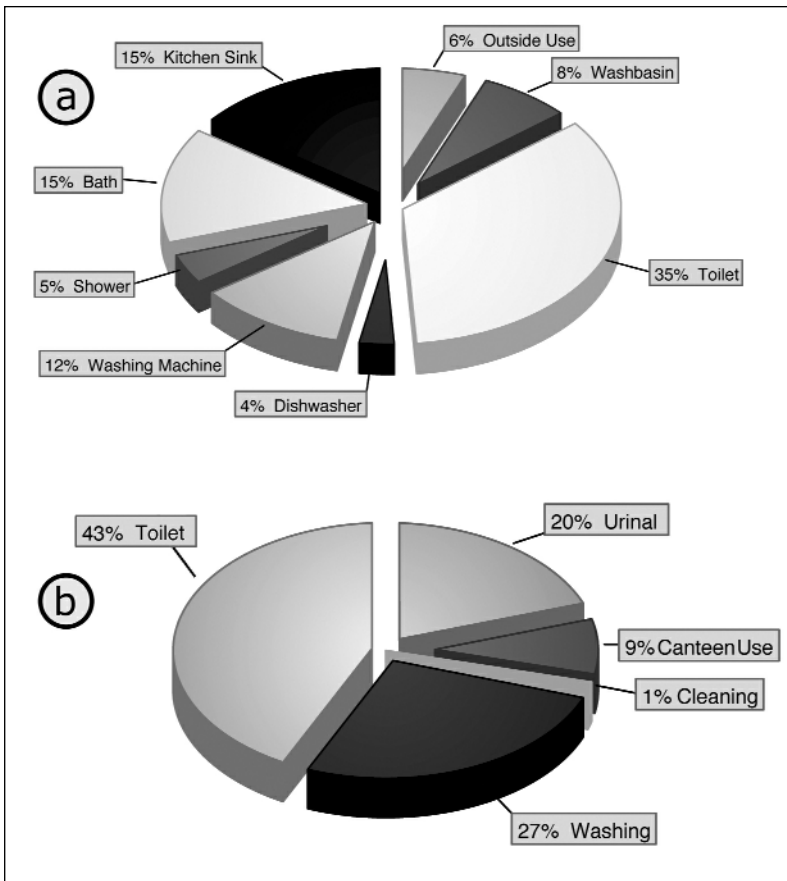


Figure 1.7 Usage of water in a typical house (a), and office (b)
Data courtesy of the Environment Agency and the Building Research Establishment.

An audit will help to determine where the biggest water savings can be made. The average domestic situation is shown in figure 1.7a. If you are interested in minimising water use in your work place, then figure 1.7b shows the typical water uses in an office. More detailed data on commercial water uses within specific sectors is available via the 'Watermark' project (details are listed in the Further Reading section at the end of this chapter).