Information Bulletin
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New Plumbing Fixture Standards in the BC Building Code

Overview

Toilets and urinals represent 30% to 40% of domestic water use, both in households and in commercial and institutional buildings. Installation of more efficient models results in significant water savings. While the Building Code currently requires toilets with a 6-litre flush volume, high-efficiency toilets, which have a flush volume of 4.8 litres or less, are now available.

High-Efficiency Toilets

High-efficiency toilets (HETs) have a maximum flush volume of 4.8 litres. Dual-flush toilets are classified as HETs because the ratio of reduced flushes (up to 4.1 litres) to full flushes (up to 6 litres) results in an effective flush volume that is less than 4.8 litres. On average, high-efficiency toilets use at least 20% less water than the 6-litre models that are currently required in BC.

Effective October 4, 2010, HETs or dual-flush toilets will be required in new residential buildings (or when major renovations occur). The requirement for toilets with a maximum flush cycle of 6 litres in industrial, commercial and institutional buildings will remain unchanged.

High-Efficiency Urinals

A high-efficiency urinal (HEU) is a fixture with a flush volume of 1.9 litres or less. HEUs use approximately one-third of the amount of water used to flush the average urinal. Based on average usage, a single HEU can save close to 18,000 litres of water per year.

Whenever urinals are installed, high-efficiency (1.9 litre) urinals will be required in all new buildings (or when major renovations occur).

Implementation

The new standards will apply to building permit applications that are submitted on or after October 4, 2010. More information can be found at http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/consultation/het/index.htm.