

# The Daily

Statistics Canada

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## Releases

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### Households and the Environment Survey

2007

Increasing numbers of Canadian households are taking advantage of energy and water-saving devices in their home, and environmental issues are influencing household purchasing decisions and consumer habits.

More Canadian households are taking advantage of water-saving devices such as low-flow shower heads and low-volume toilets. In 2007, 62% of Canadian households reported they had a low-flow shower head, up from 54% the year before. Low-flow shower heads use up to 70% less water than standard shower heads and can save about 15% on the cost of heating the water.

Households in Ontario (65%) were most likely to have had a low-flow shower head while those in Saskatchewan (46%) were least likely.

In 2007, 39% of households reported that they had a low-volume toilet, up from 34% a year earlier. These toilets typically use less than six litres of water per flush, compared with older toilets that can use more than twice that amount.

Provincially, 47% of households in Ontario and Alberta reported they had low-volume toilets. Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec trailed at 28% and 30%, respectively.

#### Energy conservation

More Canadian households are taking advantage of energy-saving devices, such as energy-efficient light bulbs and programmable thermostats. In 2007, 84% reported that they had at least one type of energy-saving light in their home.

Between 2006 and 2007, the proportion using at least one compact fluorescent light bulb rose from 56% to 69%. Households in all provinces contributed to this increase.

As well, almost one-half of all households used fluorescent tubes and 35% used at least one halogen light. Both are types of energy-saving light bulbs.

#### Controlling the temperature

Programmable thermostats automatically adjust the temperature setting according to the time of the day. In 1994, 16% of households with a thermostat had one that was programmable; by 2006, this had

#### Note to readers

*This release is based on new results from the 2007 Households and the Environment Survey (HES), which investigated actions of households that have positive and negative impacts on the environment. More than 21,000 households were surveyed by telephone in late 2007 and early 2008.*

*The 2007 survey covered six major themes: consumption and conservation of energy; consumption and conservation of water; indoor environment; use of pesticides and fertilizers; outdoor air quality; and consumer decisions.*

*The HES is a biennial survey, conducted under the umbrella of the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators program, a broader initiative of Statistics Canada, Environment Canada and Health Canada.*

*The survey aims to provide socioeconomic information that will assist in the interpretation of the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators for water quality, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.*

more than doubled to 40%. This level was up slightly to 42% in 2007. Among households with such a device, about 16% had not programmed it.

In Ontario, 53% of households had a programmable thermostat. This was more than double the proportion of 24% in 1994 and slightly higher than in 2006. Households in the Atlantic provinces were least likely to have one.

#### Drinking water

In 2007, 30% of households drank predominantly bottled water, whether they had a municipal or private water supply. The rest consumed water from the tap or from both the tap and bottle.

In 2007, 35% of households that had a non-municipal water supply tested their drinking water, unchanged from 2006. Of those that did test their water, 12% found a problem.

Among those with a municipal water supply, the proportion of households that treated their drinking water rose from 48% in 2006 to 54% in 2007. The proportion increased from 45% to 49% for those with a non-municipal water supply.

The majority of those with a municipal water supply treated their water to improve the taste or appearance. In 2007, 43% on a municipal water supply said they did so to address concerns about possible bacterial contamination. Almost one-third of households on a non-municipal water supply treated their water for this reason. This reason was reported the most frequently in Ontario and British Columbia.

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## Indoor environment

According to Health Canada, exposure to radon caused an estimated 1,900 deaths in Canada in 2006. In 2007, 41% of Canadian households reported that they had heard of radon gas and knew of its impact on human health when it was present in homes.

However, this varied from province to province. More than half of the households in Nova Scotia (55%), Saskatchewan (54%), and Manitoba (51%) indicated they were cognizant of it. In Quebec, this level of reported awareness dropped to 20% of households. Among Canadian households that did report an awareness of radon, 11% said that their household had been tested for the presence of the gas.

In 2007, two-thirds of Canadian households with a forced air furnace changed their furnace filters at least every six months. Compared with the rest of the country, households in the Prairie provinces and in Ontario were more likely to replace their furnace filters every three months or more.

## Pesticides

Nationwide, the proportion of households using any type of pesticide on their lawn or garden increased from 29% in 2006 to 33% in 2007. Overall, 12% of households using these substances reported that they used organic pesticides.

Pesticide use was highest in the three Prairie provinces and lowest in the Atlantic provinces and Quebec. In Quebec, where strict regulations on pesticide use were imposed in recent years, 4% of households reported chemical pesticide use on their lawn or garden.

In Saskatchewan, 48% of households used pesticides, the highest in the nation, followed closely by

Manitoba and Alberta (47% each). In the Atlantic provinces, the proportion ranged from 21% in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island to 25% in Newfoundland and Labrador.

While the use of pesticides by households in the West was relatively high, households tended to apply them only as needed. In contrast, households in Ontario and Quebec were more likely to have applied them as part of a regular maintenance program.

## Reusable grocery bags

Nationally, 30% of Canadian households reported that they always used recycled or reusable bags when doing their grocery shopping. The highest proportions were in Ontario (35%) and Quebec (33%).

Many retailers have aimed to reduce the use of plastic bags by offering reusable bags as alternatives, or charging a fee for the disposable bags.

Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia reported a greater proportion of households that rarely or never used them.

**Available on CANSIM: tables 153-0059 to 153-0066.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3881.**

The report *The Households and the Environment*, 2007 (11-526-XWE, free), is now available from the *Publications* module of our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods, or data quality of this release, contact the information officer (613-951-0297; fax: 613-951-0634; [environ@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:environ@statcan.gc.ca)), Environment Accounts and Statistics Division. ■

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## Legal aid

2007/2008 (correction)

In 2007/2008, legal aid plans in 10 provinces and territories spent \$670 million on the delivery of legal aid services.

After accounting for inflation, spending was up from the previous year in six jurisdictions, with Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and Northwest Territories reporting the largest increases at 10% each. Spending was down in New Brunswick, Quebec and Yukon and unchanged in Ontario.

Just over half of direct legal aid expenditures in 2007/2008 went towards cases involving criminal matters; the remainder was spent on civil matters. The only two legal aid plans to report spending more on cases involving civil matters were those in Quebec and Ontario.

Correction: Nearly 748,000 applications for legal assistance were submitted to the 10 reporting legal aid plans in 2007/2008, down 1% from the previous year. Among the 10 jurisdictions, 4 (Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan) reported declines. In Quebec, the decline in applications was for civil cases only, whereas in the other three jurisdictions, applications were down for both criminal and civil cases.

The legal aid plans approved more than 472,000 applications for full legal aid service in 2007/2008, unchanged from the previous year. Approvals were down in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Yukon. Elsewhere, the levels increased or remained the same.

In most of the reporting jurisdictions, criminal cases represented a large majority of approved applications, 70% or more in 2007/2008. The exceptions were Ontario and Quebec, which both had similar proportions of applications approved for criminal and civil cases.

**Note:** The annual Legal Aid Survey provides the justice community, academics and the public with information on revenues, expenditures, personnel, and caseload statistics associated with the delivery and administration of legal aid. Three jurisdictions (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and Nunavut) were unable to provide data in 2007/2008. Comparisons with data for previous years exclude these three jurisdictions.

**Available on CANSIM: tables 258-0001 to 258-0004.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3308.**

The annual report, *Legal Aid in Canada: Resource and Caseload Statistics, 2007/2008* (85F0015XWE, free), is now available. From the *Publications* module of our website, choose *All subjects*, then *Crime and justice*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Information and Client Services (toll-free 1-800-387-2231; 613-951-9023), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. ■

## New products

**Households and the Environment, 2007**  
**Catalogue number 11-526-XWE**  
(free).

**Legal Aid in Canada: Resource and Caseload**  
**Statistics, 2007/2008**  
**Catalogue number 85F0015XWE**  
(free).

**All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.**

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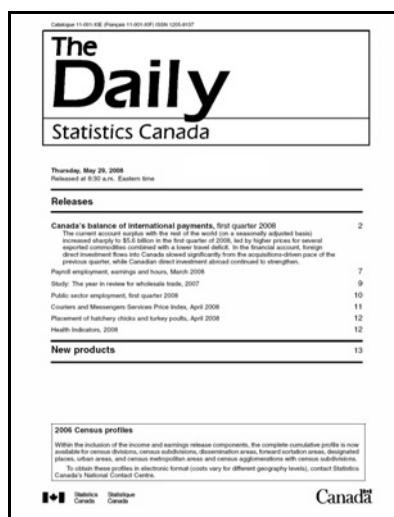
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