

Canadian System of Environmental–Economic Accounts: Water use, 2019

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Industry continues to be the main driver of water consumption

In 2019, total water use in Canada reached 36.1 billion cubic metres, a slight decrease of 0.5 billion cubic metres from 2017 levels. Industrial water use totalled 33.1 billion cubic metres (91.7% of the total) in 2019, which is a decrease of 1.7% compared with 2017. In comparison, economic growth was 4.9%, as measured by gross domestic product (GDP) from 2017 to 2019.

In 2019, the intensity of industrial water use was 16.6 cubic metres per \$1,000 of real GDP, a decrease of 6.3% from 2017.

In 2019, industrial water use was heaviest in electric power generation, transmission and distribution, which accounted for 70.9% of all water use by industries in Canada. This was followed by the crop production (5.4%) and paper manufacturing (4.6%) industries.

Of the top five industries that have the highest water use, the most significant changes occurred in animal production (-19.1%) and crop production (-16.7%). These decreases coincided with high levels of precipitation in 2019.

Population grows faster than household water demand

Water use by Canadian households increased slightly in 2019, with their share of total use up to 8.3% from 8.1% in 2017. During the same period, Canada's population increased by 2.9%.

Note to readers

Statistics Canada's physical flow accounts record the annual flows of natural resources, products and residuals between the Canadian economy and the environment. Data are presented to reflect the activities of industries, households and governments and follow the classification system used in Statistics Canada's supply and use tables. These data are available at the national level only.

Revised data for reference years 2009 to 2017 from the physical flow accounts are now available for water use.

The Industrial Water Survey (IWS) did not collect information for the 2019 survey cycle because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the IWS is a major source of data for the water use account, water intake for the manufacturing, mining and quarrying and the thermal-electric power generation industries were estimated through modelling for the 2019 reference year. More details can be found on the [Canadian System of Environmental-Economic Accounts metadata page](#).

Available tables: [table 38-10-0250-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: [survey number 5115](#).

The infographic "[Physical Flow Accounts: Water use in 2019](#)" is available as part of the series *Statistics Canada — Infographics (11-627-M)*.



For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).