

Efficiency Standards for Showerheads

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Efficiency standards set by Congress more than three decades ago reduce water waste from showerheads. Testing has repeatedly shown that today's models can provide an excellent shower.

Showerhead standards save consumers money on their water and energy bills and help protect the environment.

Congress established today's federal standard limiting showerheads to spraying 2.5 gallons of water per minute in a bipartisan law signed by President Bush in 1992. The standard went into effect in 1994.

In 2010, the federal government [waived](#) a restriction preventing states from adopting stronger showerhead standards. Today, 14 states have standards that save more water than the national standard, and by ASAP's count of a [federal database](#), more than three-quarters of showerheads on the market use at least 20% less water than the maximum allowed by federal law.

Consumer Reports' testing found models that "use even less water than what the law allows while still providing a powerful shower that leaves you feeling recharged."

Today's showerheads can provide robust spray

Showerhead standards have spurred manufacturers to make devices that are more satisfying while using less water. Independent testing by [Consumer Reports](#) and by [Wirecutter](#) has found that today's models can provide a powerful flow and that weak showers are often attributable to the home's plumbing or limescale buildup on the showerhead.

Wirecutter says, "Any good showerhead is likely to be an upgrade over the one you inherited when you moved into your place, especially if it's more than a decade old. Improvements to materials and engineering mean modern showerheads deliver a steady spray regardless of water pressure and make them much less prone to mineral buildup in the spray nozzles." It says its top-rated showerhead, which uses less water than allowed under the federal standard with a flow rate of 1.75 gallons per minute, "soaks you like a summer downpour."

The standards cut utility bills and protect the environment

Efficient showerheads save families money on their utility bills. Showers account for [20%](#) of the average American family's daily indoor water use, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Water-saving showerheads also save energy—heating water accounts for [about a fifth](#) of the average home's energy use.



In addition to lowering household costs, reducing water and energy waste is critical at a time of growing [water supply concerns](#) and climate change.

Trump action briefly allowed unlimited water use—and was opposed by manufacturers

In 2020, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) under President Trump finalized a rule that allowed showerheads to use an unlimited amount of water. It sidestepped the 1992 law by reinterpreting the word “showerhead,” allowing manufacturers to make devices with many 2.5 gallon-per-minute nozzles. Manufacturers opposed the [change](#), and few if any made products exploiting the loophole.

In 2021, with the support of a wide range of consumer groups, water conservation groups, and utilities and [manufacturers](#), DOE [undid](#) the Trump-era loophole, ensuring that all new showerheads do not unnecessarily waste water.

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