

Save Money and Reduce the Carbon Footprint of your Older Condo

Do you rent or own a condo in an older building?

According to Environment and Climate Change Canada, commercial and residential buildings are responsible [for 7-12% of greenhouse gas emissions](#). If you own or rent a suite in an older condo building, you may feel like there isn't much you can do to control your monthly hydro and water bills. However, there are ways you can update your building that will save you money and reduce the environmental impact of your condo.

Permeable Pavers: Giving rainwater a chance to drain will reduce flooding, saving you from expensive repairs and the need for mold and mildew remediation. You're also doing your part for Mother Nature by allowing water to drain naturally into the soil to replenish the water table.

Low-flow Fixtures: Replacing your showers and taps with low-flow fixtures really helps to reduce your water consumption. Opt for low-flow six-litre toilets which can slash your water [usage by 50%](#). Lower water consumption is good for the environment and helps to cut your monthly bills.

Water Heaters: Turn down your water heater temperatures to 46-48°C (115-120°F). You won't feel the difference, but you will be saving money on your hydro bill.

Individual Metering: Winter heating and summer cooling accounts for about [49% of condo energy costs](#). You can also install smart meters which control your thermostat, turning down the heating and cooling when you are not home or sleeping.

Roof Gardens: Ask your condo board if you can install a planter garden or raised garden bed on your condo building's roof. Not only do roof gardens improve your building's insulation, they also provide a welcome reprieve for residents and animals. Rooftop gardens can also be used for growing vegetables, fruits and herbs so residents get organic, locally-grown produce.

Energy Star Appliances: Replacing aging appliances with Energy Star options which are more efficient not only saves you money on your hydro bill, it also reduces your greenhouse gas emissions. You can get rebates for many Energy Star appliances. [Check here](#) to see if your condo qualifies for Energy Star rebates.

Consider an in-home energy usage display which you can get through programs like [Peaksaver Plus](#). [Studies show](#) that when condo occupants are able to monitor their energy usage, they are far more effective at reducing consumption.

Lightbulbs: Switching out older light bulbs for [energy-efficient ones](#) will help you see significant savings. Installing LED fixtures will reduce your lighting bill by [up to 50%](#). If changing out all the lightbulbs in your condo seems like a large capital outlay, consider that just changing the five most used bulbs will save you [\\$75 a year](#).

Peak Hours: Operate appliances like washing machines and dishwashers in [off-peak hours](#) to save money on your hydro bill.

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