Canal de Isabel II

Water consumption in the Autonomous Community of Madrid decreased 6 % during April, and the reservoirs are at 85 %

Press release

The use of dishwashers, taps and cisterns increased between 6 % and 19 % during confinement

- Canal de Isabel II has conducted a study on consumption habits among a panel of users
- The time of day of greatest consumption in homes is now four hours later than it was before confinement
- During confinement, morning showers are taken at night, and dishwashers are running at lunch time

03MAY2020 – Residents of Madrid consumed during this past April 34 hm^3 of water, 6 % less than the amount recorded the same month last year. Thus, May began with the reservoirs at 85 % of their capacity, 8 points above the value recorded a year ago, and 7 points above the historical average.

This drop in water consumption may be related to multiple factors, such as lower industrial consumption or less irrigation of parks and green areas in a month in which rainfall has been almost 25 % more than the historical average for April. Therefore, and in spite of the excellent hydrological situation of the Autonomous Community of Madrid, Canal de Isabel II calls for responsible water consumption.

STUDY ON THE CONSUMPTION OF 300 HOMES

Throughout this month, Canal de Isabel II has been able to unravel the results of a study that analyses how the way water is consumed in homes has changed: in terms of quantity, hours of consumption and specific uses of this water.

The project, launched in 2008 by the company's R&D+I sub-directorate, studies the consumption habits of nearly 300 different types of homes throughout the Autonomous Community of Madrid. Thanks to sensors installed in the homes, consumption in showers or bathrooms, cisterns, taps, washing machines, dishwashers, leaks or involuntary consumption, irrigation and swimming pools can be differentiated.

Therefore, thanks to this study, the company has been able to compare consumption in the first week of March, prior to all the containment measures, with the last week of the same month, and not only the quantities consumed, but also how much consumption has varied in the uses studied and whether it has been done at the same times or not.

In overall figures, consumption in these homes has increased by almost 10 litres per day, an increase of 3.5 %. Furthermore, water consumption is spread out at very different times from the usual ones: if in the first week of March the time of the day of greatest consumption was between 7 and 8 in the morning and then dropped significantly until around 8 p.m., at the end of the month the time of greatest consumption is extended by about four hours, between 11 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon.

The redistribution of water consumption is not only on an hourly basis, but also within the home itself: there is a 6 % increase in consumption in cisterns, which are now starting to be used later and in a more sustained way throughout the day. Moreover, the time of least consumption in cisterns, excluding the early morning, is right at 8 p.m.

14 % INCREASE IN THE USE OF TAPS

Consumption at the taps also increased, up to 14 %, with a particular difference between the two weeks compared at lunchtime, the time of greatest consumption during confinement. Dishwashers follow the same logic: consumption of these appliances increased by 19 % during confinement, and a demand for this use is particularly noticeable at lunchtime, when consumption in the first week of March was rather insignificant.

The water consumption of washing machines is lower, reducing their expenditure by 16 %, probably due to greater planning, allowing for fuller machines, and less clothing used because of more time spent at home. Water consumption in showers also went down, by up to 12 %. The morning shower becomes a night shower during confinement: the time of most consumption in showers went from 7 - 8 a.m. to 8 - 9 p.m. Less exercise, less movement, less contact with the pollution and dirt in the street and, in general, less dynamism in a cleaner environment may be the reasons for preferring the tap to the shower.

Canal de Isabel II was founded almost 170 years ago to supply water to the city of Madrid. It employs more than 2,800 people working daily to provide a service to more than 6 million people in the region. It is an innovative company, a leader in its sector, and internationally recognised for its management of the integrated water cycle.

It operates 13 reservoirs; 78 spring tappings; 17,601 kilometres of water conveyance and distribution; 131 drinking water pumping stations and 133 waste water stations; 15,083 kilometres of sewer system networks; 65 storm tanks; 157 waste water treatment plants; and 615 kilometres of recycled water networks.