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Piscataway, N.J. — Today's consumers have extended multitasking into their bathrooms, making optimum use of every possible moment — whether it's checking e-mail, talking on cell phones or listening to iPods while striving to conserve water, according to American Standard's 2008 Bathroom Habits survey

This May, American Standard polled consumers across the country to determine how they are using their time in the bathroom in order to determine what products and amenities they might need now and in the future. The results are based upon online surveys conducted by Opinion Research Corporation among a demographically representative U.S. sample of 1,001 homeowners, age 18 and older, living in the continental United States.

“Americans have a lot on their minds these days, from saving time and money to escaping from the pressures of everyday life,” said Jeannette Long, director of marketing communications for American Standard. “They are not only multitasking in the bath, but they also want multitasking fixtures that offer beauty, comfort and reliability that meet their growing concerns for water conservation.”

Behind-the-door

The survey shows that people are doing a lot of things inside their bathrooms besides the obvious: Eighty-eight percent use at least one electronic device in the bathroom; more than a third read their mail — both snail mail and e-mail; 43% get dressed; 20% sing; 19% listen to music via radio or iPod; 15% talk on the phone; and 3% watch TV.

Escape time: a precious commodity

According to the survey, the average amount of time people spend in the bathroom every day is about 30 minutes, but one in four spend more than an hour. Women are significantly more likely to spend over an hour in the bathroom (37% for women versus 15% for men). Women also are more likely to take longer than men in the shower, with more than half taking 10 or more minutes. Having children increases their desire to escape to the shower, with 58% of people with children taking longer showers than those who don't.

“The percentage of consumers who have reduced the amount of time they spend in the shower over the past four years is minimal, based on data we collected from the 2004 Bathroom Habits survey,” said Long. “With conservation being even more top of mind with consumers today, it's surprising that they still spend

approximately the same amount of time in the shower.”

The survey also looked closely at the bathroom habits of people living in Atlanta, Boston, Miami, Minneapolis and Seattle. In Atlanta, people are more likely to be listening to the radio; in Boston, they are reading magazines and their mail; in Miami, they are more likely to be talking on their phones than in any other part of the country (22% in Miami claim to do this compared to a national average of 16%).

People in Atlanta top the nation in taking their time in the bathroom with 62% staying 30 minutes or more and 28% spending more than an hour. Seattle comes in second, with 60% taking more than 30 minutes. In Miami, 53% spend fewer than 30 minutes in the bathroom while Minneapolis has 49% spending less than a half-hour each day in the bathroom.

The survey also examined consumer toilet frustrations. The top toilet frustrations for consumers include fixtures that don't flush all the way (19%), appearance (18%), running water or needing to jiggle the handle (18%), and not conserving water (17%). Not surprisingly, almost half (46%) said the most important feature when purchasing a toilet was reliability.

Yet water is precious, too

Ninety-one percent of consumers are conserving water. The most common way consumers are trying to save water is by turning it off when they brush their teeth, limiting the time spent in the shower, taking fewer showers and baths, and flushing the toilet less frequently.

Most consumers were surprised to learn they could be saving as much as 4,000 gallons of water per year if they used a water-conserving toilet, with 94% saying they would be prepared to use such a toilet. Some of the toilets on the market allow consumers to save water and customize how much they use. High-efficiency toilets also save water while helping to achieve green building ratings in remodeling and new construction.

To help consumers learn about water conservation and how many dollars they can save by converting to various water-efficient fixtures and faucets, American Standard offers a new water savings calculator and rebate locator at <http://www.americanstandard.com/waterefficiency>. The rebate locator lists current water conservation rebates available throughout the United States.

“It is the most comprehensive tally of water-saving incentives available in the industry,” said Long.

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