



**The Atlas of Canada**  
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**Atlas of Canada 6th Edition  
(archival version)**  
**Threats to Ecosystems —  
Sewage Treatment**

Urban living generates waste that is usually treated to some degree and then discharged into water bodies. Too much waste can pose a risk to aquatic ecosystems and species. Pollutants can remain environmentally damaging even after passing through conventional sewage treatment. Municipal wastewater, including residential, commercial and industrial wastewater, is the major source of contaminants in the marine environment. In southern Canada, where most Canadians live, much of the municipal wastewater is treated by reducing some of the oxygen, suspended solids, phosphorus and sometimes ammonia and nitrogen to reduce the environmental impact on the receiving aquatic ecosystems. The map shows the percentage of the population without access to sewage treatment by ecoregion.

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 km  
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection. Standard Parallels 49°N and 77°N

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Percentage of population without sewage treatment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insufficient data</li><li>&lt; 25%</li><li>25% - 50%</li><li>50% - 75%</li><li>75% - 100%</li></ul> | <b>Populated Places</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 - 4999</li><li>5 000 - 49 999</li><li>50 000 - 99 999</li><li>100 000 and greater</li><li>Provincial and Territorial Capital</li><li>National Capital</li></ul> | <b>Boundaries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>International</li><li>Provincial / Territorial</li><li>Canada / Kalasiit Nunaat dividing line</li><li>EEZ (200 mile)</li></ul> |
|--|---|--|

**Source(s):**  
**Percentage of Population Without Sewage Treatment**  
The levels of wastewater treatment were weighted according to population served by primary, secondary, tertiary or no treatment. Environment Canada, 1999. Municipal Water Use database.

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