

Story 1 - Marita Moll

It is a very simple language confusion issue. I was in a shopping mall in Britain (1980's), 6 mths pregnant and needing to use the facilities. So, not seeing anything obvious, I began asking people where I might find a washroom (normal Canadian euphemism). When that only elicited confused looks and I began asking for a bathroom (another Canadian euphemism), people really thought I was crazy. "You can't have a bath here!" Finally someone realized that I was looking for the toilets. In English Canada, you would not ask a stranger for the location of the toilets. A toilet is an appliance located in a bathroom, like a shower or a sink.

In French Canada, of course, les toilettes would work just fine, salles de bain would also be okay. But salle de lavage (washroom)? Never!.