

The WaterSense® Blueprint

Issue X, Summer 2016

The WaterSense *Blueprint* is a quarterly update dedicated to news and events related to WaterSense labeled homes. **Sign up** to receive The WaterSense *Blueprint* and get WaterSense news delivered right to your inbox. You can also help spread the word by distributing the *Blueprint* (4 pg, 1MB, **About PDF**) to builders and developers looking to incorporate water efficiency into their projects. If you missed any of our previous issues, you can find them in our **Blueprint Archives**.

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Why Is the WaterSense Label Important and How Can Our Homes Earn It?**
- **Featured Builder: Northwest (Arkansas) Regional Housing Authority**
- **In the News**
- **Calendar of Events**

WHY IS THE WATERSENSE LABEL IMPORTANT AND HOW CAN OUR HOMES EARN IT?

It's a question that's come up many times over the years—why is the WaterSense label so important? The label itself might be small in size compared to a home, but its significance is big for both builders and homeowners. Here are a few reasons why:

Why WaterSense?

- All WaterSense labeled homes have been inspected and certified using WaterSense's **inspection protocol**. The full series of quality checks built into the certification process and credibility of the WaterSense brand help you demonstrate that a home is high-performing.
- Incorporating criteria from the **WaterSense specification** will improve a home's water efficiency, but only homes that have passed the full inspection and certification process can claim indoor and outdoor performance benefits, such as: faster hot water delivery; plumbing fixtures and appliances that do more while saving water and energy; a low-maintenance, water-saving landscape; and up to \$600 less in utility bills each year.
- The WaterSense label offers independently certified assurance that plumbing systems and products will perform well. For example, even

Why WaterSense?

WaterSense Labeled Homes: The Benefits



though home buyers can't see the plumbing system, an inspector has tested the hot water distribution for efficiency. This provides homeowners with advantages they can see in their utility bills and feel in their hot water, which gets to the tap faster!

- Problems do happen. We'd like to think that homes function perfectly, but leaks are common and can sometimes even appear in new homes. WaterSense requires a full leak detection protocol, including a pressure loss test and dye tablet tests, to ensure that fixtures and systems in the home work properly. The WaterSense inspection and certification process is a final quality check that makes sure a home delivers superior quality and value—thus reducing callbacks.
- Green building has grown from a niche market to a savvy business strategy, so make your home official with the WaterSense label. According to a *McGraw-Hill Construction SmartMarket Report*, nearly 75 percent of builders report that customers are willing to pay more for a green home. What's more, 47 percent of single-family builders and 59 percent of multi-family builders say marketing green homes is easier than marketing traditional homes. Adding the WaterSense label helps attract home buyers in a competitive market where third-party certifications matter and consumers are looking for a choice in efficient homes.

Earning the WaterSense Label for Homes

Certification doesn't have to be complicated, and WaterSense is here to help. Builders who have constructed ENERGY STAR® certified homes will find the WaterSense labeling process similar and are often able to use the same rater for WaterSense labeled homes.

1. **Partner with WaterSense:** If you're not yet a WaterSense builder partner, fill out our brief online **partnership agreement**. Partnership is free and required for any builder that wants its homes to earn the WaterSense label.
2. **Collaborate and build:** Work with your trades, vendors, and raters or inspectors to make sure your home will meet the **WaterSense specification**. WaterSense resources offer additional guidance, such as our in-depth **Builder Resource Manual and Guide for Efficient Hot Water Delivery Systems**.
3. **Choose your provider:** Locate a WaterSense licensed certification provider to coordinate your WaterSense inspection. Discuss the WaterSense label with your existing home energy raters and other green building professionals—they might be able to provide this additional service. You can also contact one of the approved WaterSense providers using the **Meet Our Partners** search tool.
4. **Finish building and get inspected:** Your licensed certification provider will send a trained inspector to inspect your home and certify that it has earned the WaterSense label using **this checklist**.
5. **Success:** Congratulations—your home has earned the WaterSense label! Your licensed certification provider will give you a label certificate and optional sticker.

WaterSense®
Labeled Homes
Quick Reference Guide





Thinking about diving deeper into WaterSense labeled homes? Get your feet wet with our **NEW WaterSense Labeled Homes Quick Reference Guide** for the basics of why and how to earn the WaterSense label for your homes. This guide outlines the **WaterSense specification** criteria and benefits and covers two of the more comprehensive requirements for WaterSense labeled homes: hot water distribution and outdoor components.

Home buyers are looking for a **smart investment** in their next home. Independent inspections, as part of WaterSense certification, give home buyers peace of mind that the home will save water and provide value for years to come.

FEATURED BUILDER: NORTHWEST (ARKANSAS) REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

Since joining WaterSense in October 2014, **Northwest Regional Housing Authority** (NWRHA) in Arkansas has brought water and energy savings down south by building 25 WaterSense labeled homes—and doesn't plan to stop. The homes are part of NWRHA's Mutual Self-Help Housing Program, which helps low-income participants across 10 Arkansas counties achieve the dream of home ownership through "sweat equity." During the program, funded in part by **U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development**, six to eight participants work together with construction supervision to simultaneously build their own houses along with those of their fellow participants. That labor contribution establishes equity in the home for move-in day, which happens only after all houses in the group are complete.



A WaterSense labeled home in Harrison, Arkansas, built through NWRHA's Mutual Self-Help Housing Program.

NWRHA prides itself on providing homeowners with the most efficient homes possible and heard about WaterSense through its existing Home Energy Rating System (HERS) and ENERGY STAR rater. "Obviously this was an easy decision for us," said Construction Coordinator Cliff Kollin. "Another way we can increase efficiency in our homes, save homeowners money, and help the environment in one shot!" The new homeowners seem to be noticing these benefits, as well. According to Kollin, "Most of our homes are sold before we start, so we hear on a regular basis how much our homeowners enjoy the fast hot water and the low water bills."

NWRHA intends to earn the WaterSense label for all of its future projects and already has 30 homes planned for the next two years. "Using high-efficiency fixtures and appliances, some minor changes in plumbing and electrical, and implementing water management practices make it easy to continue to provide this great label to our homes," Kollin said. WaterSense looks forward to more savings for Arkansas homeowners!

IN THE NEWS

Read highlights about WaterSense and its partners, as well as news about trends and issues affecting the green building industry.

WaterSense News

- April 5, 2016: *Consumer Reports*, "**Improve Your Landscape Without All the Work**"
- April 2016: *Alaska Beyond*, "**Water Works**"
- March 31, 2016: NBC Right Now, "**Water-Saving Tips for Home**"
- March 12, 2016: Pantagraph, "**Saving Water Is Simple, and Light on Your Wallet**"
- March 9, 2016: Your Water Colorado Blog, "**Go Time for Colorado's Water Plan: Meeting the Plan's Conservation Goals**"
- March 1, 2016: Sudbury Local News (Ontario, Canada), "**Looking to Save Money on Your Water Bill? Here's How**"

Trends and Issues Affecting Green Building

- April 22, 2016: Environmental Leader, "**KB Home Publishes Annual Earth Day Sustainability Report**"
- April 7, 2016: *The Daily Courier* (Prescott, Arizona), "**Ask the Contractor Column: April is Water Awareness Month**"
- April 1, 2016: HamletHub, LLC, "**Clark Construction: Five Green Budget-Wise Home Improvements**"
- March 24, 2016: Realtor.com, "**Seven Bathroom Renovations That Really Pay Off**"

- March 22, 2016: EcoBuilding Pulse, “**11 Water-Conserving Projects and Products**”
- March 1, 2016: Electronic House Publishing, “**Eight High-Tech Ways to Save Water**”
- February 25, 2016: Green Living Guy, “**Keeping Up Your Eco-Friendly Home**”

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 19-22, 2016: AWWA ACE16

We hope to see you at the **American Water Works Association (AWWA) Annual Conference and Exposition (ACE16)** in Chicago, Illinois. The program presents solutions to water sector challenges in tracks of professional sessions. Stop by booth #974 to say hello to WaterSense!

July 29, 2016: Q2 2016 WaterSense Quarterly Reporting Deadline

Make sure your licensed certification providers **report** to WaterSense on any of your homes that earned the WaterSense label during the second quarter (Q2) of 2016. The Q2 2016 reporting deadline is Friday, July 29. Visit the **WaterSense partner website** to learn more.

September 27-29, 2016: EEBA Excellence in Building Conference & Expo

This year's Energy and Environmental Building Alliance (EEBA) Excellence in Building Conference and Expo will take place in Frisco, Texas. The event is an opportunity to learn about the latest in responsible and sustainable building design technology, and WaterSense will be part of a session on the third day. Visit the **EEBA website** to register and learn more.

October 5-7, 2016: WSI Conference

Get your plans moving for the **WaterSmart Innovations (WSI) Conference and Exposition!** Now in its ninth year, the conference will continue its tradition of hosting the WaterSense Partner of the Year Awards luncheon at the South Point Hotel and Conference Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.

As a reminder, we want the *Blueprint* to cover the topics you're most interested in, so please don't hesitate to suggest future topics. Email those and other comments to watersense@epa.gov.