



## **WaterSense® Draft Home Certification System**

**Version 2.0**

**April 18, 2019**

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Appendix A: Draft Application for Home Certification Organization (HCO) and Proposed Certification Method (PCM) Approval

## WaterSense® Draft Home Certification System

### 1.0 Introduction

In April 2019, WaterSense revamped the structure and requirements of its *WaterSense Specification for Homes* to further promote residential water efficiency and help enable market transformation in home construction. Rather than establishing a prescriptive set of water efficiency requirements that homes must meet, Version 2.0 of the specification aims to recognize the technical efficacy of existing home certification programs and rely on established home certification program infrastructure to facilitate the certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense.<sup>1</sup>

Home Certification Organizations (HCOs) are central to this structure. HCOs are responsible for implementing a program for the verification, certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) evaluates HCOs to ensure they have the capability, competence and proper controls to certify and label homes. The EPA also evaluates the HCO's proposed certification method (PCM), which includes the specific thresholds, criteria and/or requirements the HCO intends to stipulate that homes pursuing the WaterSense label shall meet. This evaluation helps to ensure the method was developed in a fair and transparent manner and that certified homes will meet WaterSense's efficiency requirement. The PCM becomes a WaterSense Approved Certification Method (WACM) upon the EPA's approval. Home builders who partner with WaterSense can achieve certification and earn the WaterSense label for the homes they build through an HCO of their choosing.

This *WaterSense Draft Home Certification System* outlines the organizational requirements an HCO must meet to certify homes for WaterSense and authorize the use of the WaterSense label. It also describes the requirements for and process by which the EPA will evaluate an HCO's PCM to ensure that labeled homes will meet the water efficiency requirements described in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*. Lastly, it sets out the requirements, roles and responsibilities for parties involved in the verification, certification, labeling and oversight of WaterSense labeled homes, including:

- Home builders
- HCOs
- Verifiers
- Other parties to which the HCO has designated specific responsibilities for certifying homes (designees).

This document shall be read in conjunction with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0* and the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods*. These documents each address a different aspect of the program structure, which together are essential for the certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense. In addition, WaterSense is including by reference that parties must comply with the *WaterSense Program Guidelines*, *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*, and any related technical clarifications issued by WaterSense related to the program requirements or the EPA's

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<sup>1</sup> See the *WaterSense Specification for Homes Supporting Statement* for more information on the revisions to the specification and program structure.

implementation of the WaterSense homes program. All five program documents, described in Table 1, provide the minimum requirements and the roles and responsibilities for building, certifying and labeling homes under the WaterSense program.

**Table 1. Documents applicable to the verification, certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense**

Full Title of Document	Purpose
<i>WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0</i>	Establishes the criteria for water-efficient homes to be eligible for the WaterSense label, including compliance with 1) the Mandatory Checklist, and 2) the water efficiency requirement, as verified through compliance with an HCO's WACM. Note that from this point forward, references to the <i>WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0</i> are inclusive of the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the technical requirements of an HCO's WACM.
<i>WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods</i>	Explains the EPA's process and assumptions used to assess the technical efficacy of the HCO's proposed certification method in differentiating homes that meet the water efficiency requirement in the <i>WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0</i> .
<i>WaterSense Home Certification System, Version 2.0</i>	Articulates the parties involved in, and process for, certifying and labeling homes for WaterSense.
<i>WaterSense Program Guidelines</i>	Provides guidance on eligibility criteria, conditions for participation, and general information about WaterSense.
<i>WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines</i>	Establishes guidelines for using WaterSense program marks in order to ensure promotion of a consistent WaterSense brand. Partners are required to adhere to these guidelines.

## 2.0 Effective Date

The *WaterSense Home Certification System, Version 2.0* shall be effective on [Date TBD]. Homes must be certified and labeled in accordance with these requirements starting [Date TBD].<sup>2</sup>

## 3.0 References and Definitions

In addition to the documents listed in Table 1, the following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this home certification system. Definitions within all of these documents are included by reference. For any of the referenced documents below, the most recent version applies if the version is not indicated.

<sup>2</sup> The EPA will determine the effective dates upon issuance of the final *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0* and *WaterSense Home Certification System, Version 2.0*.

- HCO licensing agreement between the EPA and the HCO.
- Applications for HCO and PCM approval.
- Builder partnership agreement between the EPA and a builder of WaterSense labeled homes.
- Technical clarifications, developed and maintained by the EPA.

Other definitions applicable to this home certification system include:

**Builder Partner:** A home builder who has committed to building or renovating homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, which includes the Mandatory Checklist and the water efficiency requirement, to be addressed through an HCO's WACM. The builder shall signify such commitment by signing a WaterSense builder partnership agreement with the EPA.

**Certification Method Technical Evaluation Process:** Process and requirements, described in detail in the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods, Version 1.0*, by which the EPA will evaluate the technical efficacy of the HCO's PCM to ensure that it can differentiate homes that meet the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*.

**Designee:** Party(ies) to whom the HCO has delegated specific responsibilities associated with verifying, certifying, and/or overseeing the verification and/or certification of WaterSense labeled homes, as allowable under this certification system.

**Home Certification Organization (HCO):** An independent organization approved and licensed by the EPA to certify and label homes. An HCO is responsible for administering a WACM that demonstrates the ability to differentiate homes that meet the water efficiency requirements in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*. An HCO is also responsible for training and authorization of verifiers, and overseeing the verification, certification and labeling of homes in accordance the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*.

**Licensing Agreement:** The legal document between the EPA and an HCO that grants the HCO access to, and conditions for authorizing the use and distribution of, the WaterSense label. Outlines the terms, roles and responsibilities for certifying and labeling homes for WaterSense in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*. Establishes a partnership between the EPA and the HCO that delineates program benefits, exclusions and activities (i.e., partner pledges and EPA commitments) to be conducted by each party.

**Mandatory Checklist:** Minimum set of requirements detailed in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0* that a home must meet to earn the WaterSense label.

**Builder Partnership Agreement:** Formal agreement between the EPA and the builder that delineates program benefits, exclusions and activities (i.e., partner pledges and EPA commitments) to be conducted by each party.

**Proposed Certification Method (PCM):** Methodology an HCO proposes to use to evaluate a home's compliance with the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*. The PCM includes the technical requirements or criteria and the

certification threshold homes must achieve to demonstrate adherence to the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*.

**WaterSense Approved Certification Method (WACM):** A certification method that the EPA has evaluated in accordance with the certification method technical evaluation process and has determined can effectively differentiate homes that meet the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*. In addition to the EPA's Mandatory Checklist, the WACM serves as the basis for certifying and labeling homes for the WaterSense program.

**WaterSense Home Verifier (Verifier):** Individual who is trained and authorized by an HCO or its designee to verify (or rate) homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, which includes the Mandatory Checklist, and by reference the requirements of the HCO's WACM.<sup>3</sup>

**WaterSense Label:** A registered certification mark that contains the words "WaterSense" and "Meets EPA Criteria" in a circular pattern around the WaterSense graphic "water drop" image. To signify a home's compliance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, an HCO or its designee will provide the WaterSense label to the builder partner. The WaterSense label will be provided in the form of a certificate or sticker, which shall contain a copy of the WaterSense label and other relevant information to identify the certified home. References to the certificate are considered synonymous with the WaterSense label and, as such, the terms may be used interchangeably throughout this document.

#### 4.0 HCO Eligibility and WACM Requirements

In accordance with the requirements and procedures set forth in this section, the EPA shall evaluate and approve the HCO and its PCM. This evaluation shall include three components:

- HCO Organizational Requirements (Section 4.1): The EPA shall evaluate the HCO's organizational structure and processes and procedures in place to conduct the verification, certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense. An HCO may use a designee (Section 4.2) to meet many of the organizational requirements.
- Certification Method Development Process (Section 4.3): The EPA shall evaluate the process by which the technical requirements of an HCO's PCM were developed to ensure openness and transparency.
- Certification Method Technical Evaluation Process (Section 4.4): The EPA shall evaluate the technical efficacy of the HCO's PCM in demonstrating homes' compliance with the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*.

Interested HCOs shall apply to the EPA in accordance with the process described in Section 5.0.

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<sup>3</sup> A verifier may be an employee of a designee, an employee associated with an independent organization that contracts for verification services, an individual that contracts for verification services or, under certain circumstances, a direct employee of the HCO.

## 4.1 HCO Organizational Requirements

WaterSense has identified six components of certification, described in the subsections below, that ensure an HCO has a structure in place to effectively certify homes and issue and maintain the integrity of the WaterSense label. These include:

- Independent oversight
- Quality assurance
- Verifier training and authorization
- Home verification protocols
- Impartiality
- Messaging and reporting

The HCO shall demonstrate to the EPA, through documentation supplied in its application (see Section 5.1), that it meets the requirements outlined in this section.

The HCO may delegate certain organizational requirements outlined below to a designee(s). A designee can be a provider that hires or contracts with inspectors, or other organization capable of adhering to the certification requirements, as relevant to the specific responsibility being designated. The use of designees is more fully described in Section 4.2.

### 4.1.1 Independent Oversight

The HCO shall maintain independent oversight procedures to ensure that the certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense is governed in a fair and impartial manner. This includes:

- **Maintaining an independent oversight committee(s).** The HCO shall maintain an independent oversight committee(s) or governing board of directors that supervises the HCO's operation of its program related to WaterSense, while exercising independent, professional judgment. The committee(s) shall be composed of at least three individuals with varying backgrounds representative of different program stakeholders. Employees of the HCO shall hold no more than one-third of the positions on the oversight committee(s).

### 4.1.2 Quality Assurance

The HCO shall implement quality assurance procedures that ensure that verifiers consistently inspect and document compliance in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, which includes the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the technical requirements of the HCO's WACM. At a minimum, the quality assurance shall include:

- **Auditing WaterSense labeled homes.** The HCO shall audit a subset of homes that have received the WaterSense label to ensure homes are meeting the technical requirements of the HCO's WACM and the Mandatory Checklist. The audit shall include a representative sample of WaterSense labeled homes such that it demonstrates the capacity to identified erroneous certifications.

- **Ensuring qualified verifiers.** The HCO shall only use verifiers in good standing with all training and impartiality requirements, as described in Section 4.1.3 and 4.1.5, respectively, to provide verification services.
- **Disciplining verifiers.** The HCO shall maintain and enforce disciplinary procedures for verifiers that do not meet the quality requirements of the HCO.
- **Resolving complaints.** The HCO shall maintain and execute procedures to respond to and resolve complaints involving home verification and/or certification. This includes investigating failures impacting the water efficiency of certified homes.
- **Maintaining quality assurance documentation.** The HCO shall maintain thorough documentation of quality assurance activities including audit results, verifier training/authorization records, verifier discipline records and complaint resolutions.

#### 4.1.3 Verifier Training and Authorization

The HCO shall train and authorize verifiers to verify homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, which includes the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the technical requirements of the HCO's WACM. At a minimum, this shall include:

- **Training verifiers on home verification and documentation procedures.** The HCO shall train verifiers to properly document home verifications and complete all reporting and quality assurance submissions required by the HCO and WaterSense. WaterSense shall supply each HCO with required training materials for the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0* (hereafter referred to as WaterSense program-specific training requirements). The HCO shall supplement this training with additional information needed for the verifiers to understand and administer the HCO's WACM.
- **Providing verifier training reciprocity.** The HCO shall waive any WaterSense program-specific training requirements for potential new verifiers, provided that the verifier has completed the WaterSense program-specific training requirements within the past two years (for example, as part of training under another HCO). The WaterSense program-specific training requirements are the only training requirements subject to this transferability. There is no obligation or expectation that the WACM-specific training will be transferable. Additionally, HCOs that utilize designees for quality assurance shall have procedures in place to facilitate transferability of verifiers from one designee to another.
- **Formally authorizing verifiers.** The HCO shall formally authorize verifiers to verify homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0* and the HCO's WACM. The requirements for verifier authorization shall at a minimum include: documentation of successful completion of training; and evaluation, disclosure, and resolution of conflicts of interest (COI), as outlined in Section 4.1.5. The HCO shall maintain a list of authorized verifiers and periodically report authorized verifiers to the EPA, as described in Section 4.1.6.
- **Integrating updates.** In the event of modifications or clarifications to the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0* or the HCO's WACM requirements, the HCO shall retrain verifiers on the new program requirements before the verifier inspects additional homes. The HCO shall maintain up-to-date training records.

#### 4.1.4 Home Verification Protocols

The HCO shall implement home verification protocols, which at a minimum shall include:

- **Requiring verifiers to adhere to the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*.** The HCO shall ensure verifiers conduct verifications in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, which includes the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the technical requirements of the HCO's WACM.
- **Verifying builder partnership agreement with the EPA.** The HCO shall verify that any builder seeking home certification in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0* has a signed WaterSense builder partnership agreement prior to issuing the WaterSense label and associated certification documentation.
- **Maintaining verification documentation.** The HCO shall obtain home verification documentation (e.g., checklists, scorecards) from verifiers. At a minimum, the documentation shall include:
  - Builder partner contact information;
  - Address or lot number of the verified home (and address or lot number of any homes covered by a relevant sampling protocol);
  - Documentation of verification results sufficient to recreate the verification, including a completed Mandatory Checklist required by the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*;
  - Name and contact information for the verifier; and
  - Home verification date(s).
- **Sampling protocol.** The HCO may offer builder partners the opportunity to participate in a sampling protocol if a builder partner intends to certify multiple homes within the same subdivision, planned community or multifamily building. Sampling protocols could allow a builder to seek the WaterSense label for a group of homes based on pre-analysis of building plans and subsequent verification of a sample set of the homes. If the HCO chooses to offer a sampling protocol for home certification, the protocol shall outline eligibility requirements for a builder partner to participate in the sampling protocol and ensure that verification occurs on a representative sample of homes constructed by the builder partner. The protocol shall also establish processes for revoking eligibility for sampling based on failure to meet certification and quality assurance requirements.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.1.5 Impartiality

The HCO shall have a systematic method for ensuring financial, legal, and ethical impartiality as it pertains to verifying a home's compliance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0* and the HCO's WACM, and as it pertains to issuing the WaterSense label. The HCO's impartiality management strategy shall account for both organizational and individual

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<sup>4</sup> In Version 1.2 of the *WaterSense New Home Certification System*, the EPA defined the sampling protocol to include the successful inspection of the first seven homes within a subdivision, planned community or multifamily building, after which the verifier could randomly select and verify one home from every additional batch of seven homes. To provide additional flexibility under this version of the certification system, the HCO may choose to implement sampling at a lower rate, provided it demonstrates to the EPA that it has other quality assurance activities in place to ensure continued compliance with the requirements of the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*.

COI. Organizational COI pertains to the organization(s) responsible for various aspects of home verification and certification, whereas individual COI pertains to a specific person involved in the verification or certification decision. Examples of COI include, but are not limited to, an organization or individual:

- Providing consulting or design services for a home.
- Acting as the seller of the home or the seller's agent.
- Acting as the lender for some portion of the financed payments on the home.
- Selling, supplying or installing products to facilitate the home meeting the specification criteria.
- Participating in both verification and sales or marketing activities of the HCO.

#### 4.1.5.1 HCO Impartiality

The HCO is responsible for implementing its COI strategy for the organization and any individuals under its direct employ.

#### 4.1.5.2 Verifier Impartiality

An HCO that uses verifiers outside of its direct employ shall implement a verifier COI strategy that includes the following:

- **Verifier COI disclosure.** The HCO shall require current or prospective verifiers to disclose any potential or existing COI.
- **Written verifier COI policy.** The HCO shall have written procedures for evaluating and resolving potential COI disclosed by the external verifiers. The HCO must also outline procedures to be enacted in the event that COI cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

If the HCO assigns a designee(s) to implement the verifier COI policy, it shall have procedures in place to ensure the designee's compliance with the verifier COI strategy.

#### 4.1.5.3 Designee Impartiality

An HCO that uses a designee(s) as allowed by this certification system shall implement a designee COI strategy that includes the following:

- **Designee COI disclosure.** The HCO shall require current or prospective designees to disclose any potential or existing COI.
- **Written designee COI policy.** The HCO shall have written procedures for evaluating and resolving COI presented by a designee. The HCO must also outline procedures to be enacted in the event that COI issues cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

### 4.1.6 Messaging and Reporting

The HCO shall ensure information flow from WaterSense to the HCO (messaging) and information flow from the HCO to WaterSense (reporting). The HCO shall also ensure that relevant information is conveyed in a timely manner between WaterSense and the HCO's

designee(s), builders and verifiers. At a minimum, the HCO's messaging and reporting procedures shall include:

- **Centralized messaging structure.** The HCO shall have a structure that enables it to disseminate information from WaterSense to relevant stakeholders. Stakeholders can include designees, verifiers and/or builders. Messaging shall be complete, clear and timely.
- **Inquiry response system.** The HCO shall have procedures for stakeholders to submit questions about home certifications and the WaterSense label. The HCO shall have a means of providing accurate and timely responses to these inquiries.
- **Quarterly reporting to WaterSense.** The HCO shall report home certification information to WaterSense at least quarterly. At minimum, the HCO shall provide the following information regarding the homes certified and WaterSense labels issued in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*:
  - Builder partner name
  - Number of certified homes
  - General location of certified home(s), including development (if applicable), city, state and zip code
- **Non-routine requests for reporting program information to WaterSense.** The HCO shall provide additional program information to WaterSense in a timely manner, as requested. On occasion, WaterSense may request information about topics including, but not limited to:
  - Mandatory Checklists for specific homes
  - Promotional materials created by the HCO and/or its designee(s)
  - Common non-conformities or issues encountered during the past quarter
- **Maintaining information about authorized verifiers and reporting to WaterSense.** The HCO shall maintain basic information about authorized verifiers. In addition, the HCO shall report information about their authorized verifiers to WaterSense at least quarterly. WaterSense shall provide the HCO with a standardized format for reporting, which shall include, at a minimum, the following information for each authorized verifier:
  - Name
  - Employer (or company name if self-employed)
  - Phone number
  - Email address (if available)
  - Website URL (if available)
  - State(s) and markets where verification services are offered
  - Confirmation if the information about the verifier can be made publicly available

#### 4.2 HCO Responsibilities for the Use of Designees

The HCO is permitted to delegate certain responsibilities to one or more designees, with the exception of the responsibilities described below. In the instance of delegation, the HCO shall provide WaterSense with information about the use of designee(s) and shall submit sufficient information on policies that it requires designee(s) to follow. If the HCO plans to use a designee(s), the HCO shall also submit its procedures for overseeing the designee(s) and the fulfillment of their responsibilities. Procedures shall also include the process by which an HCO will remove a designee if it fails to meet the HCO's requirements.

The EPA has identified specific requirements the HCO may not delegate. Specifically, the HCO itself must:

- Maintain the final authority over the certification decision and issuance of the WaterSense label as outlined in Section 5.3;
- Establish and implement impartiality requirements as outlined in Section 4.1.5; and
- Report information on authorized verifiers and certified homes to WaterSense as outlined in Section 4.1.6.

HCOs using a designee(s) shall implement procedures that include, at a minimum, the following, as applicable to the responsibilities of the designee(s):

- **Overseeing designee(s) performing quality assurance activities.** If an HCO assigns a designee(s) to fulfill some or all of its quality assurance services, the HCO shall monitor and oversee the designee(s) to ensure that it follows the quality assurance procedures and requirements established by the HCO.
- **Overseeing designee(s) performing verifier training.** If an HCO assigns a designee(s) to train and authorize verifiers, the HCO shall develop or approve the designee training program and monitor and oversee the designee(s) to ensure that it is fulfilling the training requirements. The HCO shall retain and maintain a list of trained and authorized verifiers from the designee(s).
- **Collecting information from designee(s) and verifiers.** The HCO shall collect data from its designee(s) needed to satisfy WaterSense reporting requirements.

#### 4.3 HCO Certification Method Development Process

In developing the technical requirements included in the PCM, the HCO shall follow one of the three approaches outlined below to demonstrate that the requirements were developed following an open and transparent process.

- **Utilize an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved standard.** The technical requirements in the PCM requirements are included in an ANSI approved standard that was developed and approved through an ANSI consensus-based standard development process. The PCM may include additional technical requirements in its PCM that it has determined are necessary to achieve additional water efficiency and/or meet the water efficiency requirements of the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*. In this instance the PCM shall disclose the additional requirements to the EPA in its application. The EPA will evaluate the requirements on a case by case basis.
- **Follow requirements for the jurisdiction with authority (for public agencies).** For HCOs that operate under the auspices of a public agency, the HCO shall demonstrate that the technical requirements included in the PCM were developed in compliance with the administrative and transparency requirements for standards and policy development of the jurisdiction having authority over the program.
- **Demonstrate development in accordance with the certification method alternative development requirements.** If neither of the first two requirements can be met, the HCO shall provide documentation demonstrating that the technical requirements included in the PCM were developed in accordance with the criteria and requirements described in Table 2.

These criteria are based on the ANSI Essential Requirements,<sup>5</sup> but have been modified to apply to certification method development for WaterSense.

**Table 2. Certification Method Alternative Development Requirements**

Criteria	Requirement
Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation in certification method development shall be open to all persons who are directly and materially affected by the certification method. There shall be no undue financial barriers to participation. Voting membership shall not be conditional upon membership in any organization, or unreasonably restricted on the basis of technical qualifications or other such requirements.</li> <li>▪ Timely and adequate notice of any action to create, revise, reaffirm, or withdraw the certification method, and the establishment of a new certification method development body shall be provided to all known directly and materially affected interests. Notice shall include a clear and meaningful description of the purpose of the proposed activity and shall identify a readily available source for further information.</li> <li>• Members shall declare all conflicts of interest at the start of the process. The member’s name (or if membership is by organization, the name of the organization with a point of contact), affiliation, and interest category of each member shall be made available to interested parties upon request.</li> </ul>
Lack of dominance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The certification method development process shall not be dominated by any single interest category, individual or organization. Dominance means a position or exercise of dominant authority, leadership, or influence by reason of superior leverage, strength, or representation to the exclusion of fair and equitable consideration of other viewpoints.</li> </ul>
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The certification method development process shall have a balance of interests. Participants from diverse interest categories shall be sought with the objective of achieving balance. If the membership lacks balance, outreach to achieve balance shall be undertaken. Balance means that no single interest category constitutes a majority of the membership.</li> <li>▪ In defining interest categories appropriate, consideration shall be given to at least the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builders</li> <li>• Home certification community</li> <li>• Manufacturers</li> <li>• Utilities</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• General interest</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Notification of certification method development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notification of certification method development activity shall be announced in suitable media as appropriate to demonstrate an opportunity for participation by all directly and materially affected persons.</li> <li>▪ Public review is made available for a minimum of 30 days prior to the final publication of the certification method.</li> </ul>
Consideration of views and objections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prompt consideration shall be given to the written views and objections of all participants.</li> <li>▪ A publicly available written response shall be provided to comments on formal ballots or public reviews drafts.</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> ANSI Essential Requirements: Due process requirements for American National Standards. 2018.

**Table 2. Certification Method Alternative Development Requirements**

Criteria	Requirement
Consensus vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of consensus in accordance with these requirements and the procedures of the certification method developer shall be documented.</li> </ul>
Appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Written procedures shall contain an identifiable, realistic and readily available appeals mechanism for the impartial handling of procedural appeals regarding any action or inaction. Procedural appeals include whether a technical issue was afforded due process.</li> <li>▪ Persons who have directly and materially affected interests and who have been or will be adversely affected by any procedural action or inaction with regard to the certification method development (or the revision, reaffirmation or withdrawal of the certification method), have the right to appeal.</li> </ul>

#### 4.4 Technical Evaluation Process for the HCO’s Certification Method

The EPA shall evaluate the technical efficacy of the PCM in accordance with its *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods, Version 1.0* to ensure that the PCM can differentiate homes that meet the efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*. Upon approval, the PCM becomes the HCO’s WACM that can be used in conjunction with the Mandatory Checklist to verify a home’s compliance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*.

The *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods, Version 1.0* describes the EPA’s process and assumptions for assessing the water efficiency a PCM achieves. It identifies the specific features (e.g., plumbing fittings, fixtures, hot water distribution, irrigation equipment) used to assess the water efficiency of a home and its landscape design(s), and describes how the EPA applies those features to a set of reference homes to estimate baseline water use for a conventional home and water efficiency that can be achieved through the application of the requirements in the PCM. All features included in the technical evaluation have documented water savings associated with their implementation. The *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods, Version 1.0* also describes how the EPA tailors its assumptions to account for the geographic scope where the PCM will be implemented (e.g., specific to a locality or region, or nationally). The EPA will use the certification method technical evaluation process to determine whether the requirements and specific thresholds or criteria specified in an HCO’s PCM can effectively identify homes that meet the EPA’s water efficiency requirement compared to typical new construction.

The HCO shall submit its PCM, including the technical requirements and all associated thresholds or other criteria that the HCO will use to determine compliance with WaterSense’s efficiency requirement, to the EPA for evaluation as part of the application process described in Section 5.1.

The EPA’s intent is to recognize a WACM for a period of five (5) years as long as it is not revised by the HCO such that the revisions could impact its ability to differentiate homes that meet the EPA’s water efficiency requirement. However, as described in Section 9.2, the EPA reserves the right to modify the certification method technical evaluation process from time to

time as technological and/or market changes affect the usefulness of the requirements to HCOs, builders, consumers, industry, or the environment or to clarify requirements. At the end of the five (5) years, if the EPA has updated or revised the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods, Version 1.0*, the EPA reserve the right to re-evaluate an HCO's WACM to ensure that it can continue to differentiate homes that meet the efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*.

If the requirements of the HCO's WACM are revised prior to the end of the five (5)-year period, the HCO shall notify the EPA of these revisions pursuant to Section 9.1. The EPA will assess the HCO's updated certification method using the latest version of the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods*.

## 5.0 Procedures and Requirements for HCOs

The EPA shall evaluate an HCO's organizational structure and PCM prior to licensing the HCO to certify and label homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, which includes the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the requirements stipulated in the WACM. This section outlines the HCO's application and licensing procedures and summarizes the HCO's roles and responsibilities under this certification system.

### 5.1 Application Procedures for HCOs

An HCO interested in certifying and labeling homes for WaterSense shall submit an application to the EPA, including all necessary documentation to demonstrate compliance with the requirements in Section 4.0. The EPA shall supply, and the HCO shall complete, the application form. A copy of the application form is provided in Appendix A to this certification system.

In addition, the HCO shall provide with its application:

- **Documentation of Organizational Requirements:** The HCO shall document compliance with the organizational requirements listed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2. This shall include information on the use and oversight of any designee(s).
- **Documentation of Certification Method Development:** The HCO shall document compliance with the requirements of the process used to develop the technical requirements included in its PCM, as described in Section 4.3.
- **Copy of the Proposed Certification Method:** The HCO shall supply the EPA with a copy of its PCM and all necessary supporting documentation to support the EPA's evaluation of the method's technical efficacy in accordance with the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods, Version 1.0*. This shall include the thresholds and criteria the HCO plans to implement to meet the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*.
- **Point of Contact:** The HCO shall designate a point of contact in its application and shall provide that individual's contact information. This point of contact shall be responsible for communicating and disseminating information to and from the EPA as appropriate and will be listed on the WaterSense website as the point of contact regarding the HCO's program.

Application forms are available on the WaterSense website. Completed applications and all supporting documentation shall be emailed to the WaterSense Helpline at [watersense@epa.gov](mailto:watersense@epa.gov).

## 5.2 HCO Licensure

Upon receipt and evaluation of the application and supporting documentation, if the HCO meets all criteria satisfactorily, the EPA shall notify the HCO that it is eligible to sign a licensing agreement. The HCO shall return signed copies of a licensing agreement supplied by the EPA. This is a legal document between the EPA and the HCO that grants the HCO access to, and conditions for authorizing the use and distribution of, the WaterSense label for homes. It also outlines the terms and roles and responsibilities for certifying and labeling homes for WaterSense in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*. The licensing agreement will also signify partnership between the EPA and the HCO and will delineate program benefits, exclusions and activities (i.e., partner pledges and EPA commitments) to be conducted by each party.

The EPA shall return signed and fully executed copies of the licensing agreement to the HCO along with an electronic version of the WaterSense label certificate and any WaterSense-specific training or other program materials. The signed agreement signifies that the HCO may train verifiers and certify homes and issue the WaterSense label.

The EPA shall maintain a listing of licensed HCOs and their respective WACMs on the WaterSense website.

The EPA reserves the right to terminate the licensing agreement for any HCO that does not actively fulfill the requirements outlined in this certification system.

## 5.3 Issuing the WaterSense Label

Prior to issuing the WaterSense label, the HCO shall ensure, either directly or through its procedures established with its designee(s), that a builder partnership agreement is in place (and signed by both parties) (described in Section 6.1). To verify the partnership, the HCO or its designee(s) should check the WaterSense website for a current list of builder partners. If the builder is not listed on the WaterSense website, the HCO or its designee(s) can verify the partnership agreement by contacting the WaterSense Helpline at (866) WTRSENS (987-7367) or [watersense@epa.gov](mailto:watersense@epa.gov).

The HCO shall maintain the final authority over the certification decision and issuance of the WaterSense label. It shall confirm that a builder partner's home(s) conforms with and has been verified in accordance with its WACM and the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, which includes the Mandatory Checklist. The HCO shall document its certification decision, and the HCO or its designee shall complete and provide to the builder partner the WaterSense label certificate for each certified home, which includes:

- A certification statement that the home has been certified to meet the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*
- The name of the builder partner

- The name/company of the authorized verifier
- The name of the HCO
- The address or lot number of the certified home
- The date of certification

At the time the WaterSense label is issued, the HCO shall also supply the builder partner with guidelines on proper use of the WaterSense program marks.

#### **5.4 Reporting and Recordkeeping**

HCOs shall maintain records associated with program operations and routinely submit documentation about verifiers and homes that have received the WaterSense label to the EPA.

##### **5.4.1 Reporting Authorized Verifiers to the EPA**

The HCO shall maintain a list of authorized verifiers who have met all training, impartiality and other requirements as outlined in the HCO's approved organizational requirements. At least quarterly, the HCO shall submit a complete list of authorized verifiers to the EPA. See Section 4.1.6 for details on information that should be included in the HCO's report.

At its discretion, the EPA may post the list of authorized verifiers (and/or associated employer) to the WaterSense website so that builder partners can find specific verifiers in their area who can provide verification services for WaterSense and the HCO's WACM. The EPA may also use the contact information provided to contact authorized verifiers or to provide informative updates about the WaterSense program. HCOs can notify the EPA of verifiers who choose to opt out of communication.

##### **5.4.2 Reporting WaterSense Labeled Homes to the EPA**

The HCO shall report at least quarterly to the EPA regarding the homes that they have certified within the previous quarter. See Section 4.1.6 for details on information that should be included in the HCO's report.

##### **5.4.3 Maintaining Records**

The HCO shall maintain records related to its implementation of the WACM and certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense and shall be able to provide the EPA with access to or copies of the records upon request. In the instance where a specific certification responsibility is delegated, as allowed under this certification system, the HCO shall ensure that the designee(s) maintains the relevant records and that it has access to the records upon request. The HCO and/or designee(s) shall maintain all relevant records for a minimum of three (3) years. At a minimum, these records shall include:

- Documentation of quality assurance activities
- Verifier training and authorizations
- Verification records
- COI disclosures and resolutions

- Documentation to support certification decisions

## 6.0 Procedures and Requirements for Builder Partners

This section outlines the requirements and procedures for builders. Builders that partner with the EPA can earn WaterSense certification through an HCO program of their choosing. To earn the WaterSense label, candidate homes will be verified and certified in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, which includes the Mandatory Checklist, and, by reference, requirements in the selected HCO's WACM.

### 6.1 Partnership With the EPA

Builders shall sign a builder partnership agreement with the EPA as described in the *WaterSense Program Guidelines* if they wish to obtain the WaterSense label for their homes. Receipt of the WaterSense label is contingent upon partnership and home certification. The HCO or its designee shall verify that the builder has a partnership agreement in place with the EPA as part of the certification process and prior to issuing the WaterSense label certificate.

The EPA shall maintain a list of builder partners who have built or plan to build WaterSense labeled homes.

As part of the builder partnership agreement with the EPA, the builder shall provide the EPA with:

- Contact information
- Company website, if applicable
- A list of states and/or localities in which they build

The EPA shall post this information on its builder partner list on the WaterSense website. The registry may also include the general location(s) (city, state) and number of WaterSense labeled homes for each builder partner, as reported by the respective HCO.

### 6.2 Application

The builder partner shall apply for certification for each individual home. To initiate the verification and certification process, the builder partner shall identify the WACM under which it would like to obtain certification and contact the respective HCO or one of its authorized verifiers directly. The EPA shall maintain a list of HCOs, information regarding the HCO's WACM, and a list of associated authorized verifiers on the WaterSense website, including the localities where the authorized verifiers offer verification services for the HCO's program.

### 6.3 Home Certification and Labeling

The builder partner shall work with the HCO or its designee(s) and authorized verifiers to determine the home's compliance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, which includes the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the requirements stipulated in the WACM. This includes compliance with all quality assurance and oversight requirements specified by the HCO. Upon verification, the HCO shall provide documentation of certification,

and the HCO or its designee will present the builder partner with a copy of the WaterSense label certificate.

The WaterSense label indicates that the home has been certified to conform to the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*. A WaterSense label shall not create any express or implied warranty. At the time the WaterSense label is issued, the HCO or designee shall also supply the builder partner with guidance on proper use of the label. The builder partner is then allowed to advertise that the home conforms to the specification. Any promotion of the WaterSense label shall be directly related to the certified home or to a community of homes that earn the WaterSense label individually. The EPA will also provide builder partners with promotional resources that will help them to advertise and market their intent to build homes to meet the WaterSense specification.

## **7.0 EPA Oversight**

The EPA is responsible for overseeing the HCO's implementation of the certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense.

### **7.1 General HCO Oversight**

The EPA reserves the right to audit the operations and records of an HCO and/or its designee(s) to ensure that the HCO is meeting the responsibilities under this certification system. The EPA shall request and the HCO shall provide the EPA with documentation to facilitate the operations and records audit.

If the EPA discovers that the HCO is failing to meet its responsibilities under this certification system, it will notify the HCO and will coordinate corrective action or, if necessary, suspend or revoke the HCO's participation in the program. In the event that an HCO fails to satisfy its responsibilities, the EPA can terminate the HCO's licensing agreement. These measures can be temporary or permanent at the EPA's discretion, dependent on the severity of the issue.

### **7.2 Surveillance of Home Conformance and Label Use**

The EPA also reserves the right to conduct periodic in-home inspections of labeled homes prior to their sale or initial occupancy and to periodically review websites and other certification references and WaterSense label usages. In the case of an in-home inspection, the EPA will coordinate the visit with the builder partner and the home's verifier and/or HCO, so as not to delay the certification process. If nonconformities with the specification are identified, the EPA will notify the HCO and/or the builder partner and will engage in corrective or other necessary action in accordance with Section 8.0 of this document.

## **8.0 Suspension or Withdrawal of the WaterSense Label From Homes**

The HCO is responsible for notifying the EPA of specific instances of nonconformity. Nonconformity may include, but is not limited to:

- Receipt of formal complaints from home buyers or other interested parties indicating that a certified home's water-efficient features were generally misrepresented (e.g., multiple features do not comply with the specification).

- Instances where the HCO or its designee discovers that a builder is fraudulently or falsely claiming that its homes have been certified and labeled in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, including the Mandatory Checklist, the HCO's WACM and this certification system.

The EPA is responsible for engaging the builder in corrective action and for determining when the use of the WaterSense label should be suspended or withdrawn due to nonconformance or improper use of or reference to the WaterSense label. The EPA might also discover nonconformance or improper use or reference to the WaterSense label from its stakeholders or during periodic reviews of certification and label usage. If the EPA discovers nonconformance or certification and labeling issues, it will notify the HCO that issued the WaterSense label and will coordinate corrective action or, if necessary, label suspension or withdrawal. WaterSense label suspension can occur for a limited period of time as specified by the EPA. During the period of suspension, the builder partner is prohibited from using the WaterSense label in conjunction with the home in question and with any home built after the issuance of a suspension, until such time as the EPA indicates the suspension can be removed. The HCO shall assist the EPA as necessary by revoking the WaterSense label from the home in question, determining when the terms for suspension removal have been fulfilled, ensuring that no new WaterSense labels are issued during the period of suspension, and upon the EPA's approval, reissuing the WaterSense label to the builder partner for the home in question.

In more severe or repeated instances of nonconformity, improper use or reference to the WaterSense label, or failure to meet the requirements for reinstatement of a suspended WaterSense label, the EPA will rescind the WaterSense label from all of the builder partner's certified homes that have not yet been sold. The EPA will notify the builder partner that the certification and WaterSense label are being withdrawn. If the WaterSense label is withdrawn for any reason, the EPA will require that the builder partner cease to advertise the certification of its homes to the WaterSense specification, and the label shall be eliminated immediately from homes not already sold. The EPA will inform the HCO that the builder partner is no longer allowed to use or receive the WaterSense label and will decide whether termination of the builder partnership agreement or other corrective action is warranted. The HCO will assist the EPA as necessary by rescinding the WaterSense label from all certified homes that have not yet been sold and will not issue any new WaterSense labels to the builder partner.

## **9.0 Amendments, Modifications and Revisions**

In the course of program operations, the HCO and/or the EPA may decide to change certain elements of program structure and function. The following sections describe procedures to be followed in the event of amendments, modifications and/or revisions initiated either by the HCO or the EPA.

### **9.1 HCO-Initiated Changes to Organizational or WACM Requirements**

The HCO shall notify the EPA in writing about any proposed organizational or WACM changes that materially affect its compliance with the requirements outlined in this certification system. Notification shall be made at least 60 days prior to the implementation of such changes and with sufficient time to allow for the EPA to evaluate the changes and determine if the HCO and its WACM will continue to meet the requirements of the certification system and the *WaterSense*

*Specification for Homes, Version 2.0.* The HCO shall notify the EPA of these changes via email by contacting the WaterSense Helpline at [watersense@epa.gov](mailto:watersense@epa.gov).

The EPA shall evaluate revisions to the HCO's WACM using the latest version of the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods*.

The EPA shall notify the HCO if modifications are needed to the proposed requirements or the licensing agreement between the EPA and the HCO as a result of the changes.

## **9.2 EPA-Initiated Program Changes**

The EPA reserves the right to amend these rules of procedure, which may include issuing technical clarifications or amending or revising this certification system, the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0* or the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods, Version 1.0*. The EPA may revise these documents independently, depending on the nature of the changes.

Revisions to the specification, certification method technical evaluation process or this certification system can occur due to technological and/or market changes that affect the usefulness of the requirements to HCOs, builders, consumers, industry, or the environment or to clarify requirements. The EPA will only make major revisions following an open public process. This will include discussion with industry and other interested stakeholders regarding the changes and any transition period. Minor revisions will generally be more editorial in nature and serve to clarify requirements. The EPA will notify stakeholders when revisions are considered major or minor. To facilitate version control, the EPA will designate a title, version number and date for all of the relevant documents it produces, as indicated below:

- *WaterSense Home Certification System*
- Version X.Y
- Month, Day, Year

## **10.0 For More Information**

For inquiries or other questions related to this home certification system or the *WaterSense Specification for Homes, Version 2.0*, please contact the WaterSense Helpline at (866) WTR-SENS (987-7367) or [watersense@epa.gov](mailto:watersense@epa.gov).

**Appendix A:**  
**Draft Application for Home Certification Organization  
(HCO) and Proposed Certification Method (PCM)  
Approval**



## Application for Home Certification Organization (HCO) and Proposed Certification Method (PCM) Approval

Home Certification Organizations (HCOs) seeking approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) WaterSense® program to operate a Proposed Certification Method (PCM) as a WaterSense Approved Certification Method (WACM) and certify and label homes for WaterSense should complete this application. As described in the *WaterSense Home Certification System*, EPA will use the completed application and any supporting materials to evaluate whether 1) the HCO meets the organizational eligibility requirements and 2) the HCO's PCM can effectively differentiate homes that meet the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*.

**Mail this form and attachments to:**  
EPA WaterSense Program  
c/o ERG  
2300 Wilson Boulevard  
Suite 350  
Arlington, VA 22201

**OR Email this form and attachments to:**  
WaterSense Helpline  
[watersense@epa.gov](mailto:watersense@epa.gov)

For more information, please contact the WaterSense Helpline at (866) WTRSENS (987-7367) or [watersense@epa.gov](mailto:watersense@epa.gov).

### Section A: General HCO and Proposed Certification Method Information

Home Certification Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
HCO website (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_  
Program website (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

PCM Building Eligibility (select all that apply):

*Single-family*

*Multifamily*

New Construction

New Construction

Existing Construction

Existing Construction

Geographic region in which PCM will be offered:

National

Regional

List Applicable States or Counties: \_\_\_\_\_

Local

List Applicable County(ies) or City(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

*By signing this application, I confirm that all the information included in this form is accurate and true, and that the organization named above is structured so as to give confidence in its competence and integrity as an HCO such that it will not allow commercial, financial, or other interests to compromise its impartiality.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Please review the *WaterSense Home Certification System* before completing this application. For reference, EPA has identified in parentheses the relevant section(s) of the *WaterSense Home Certification System* that details the specific requirements.

## **Section B: Documentation of Organizational Requirements (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.0)**

HCOs must submit in a separate document(s) the relevant procedures and include where EPA can find information related to each organizational requirement in the procedures. If the procedures described below are not part of an existing procedural document for the organization, please attach a separate written narrative describing how the HCO will fulfill the requirement(s) and/or reference appropriately below.

### *Section B.1: Use of Designees (WaterSense Home Certification System, Sections 4.0 and 4.2)*

The HCO may delegate many of the organizational requirements to a designee(s) (see Section 4.2 of the *WaterSense Home Certification System* for a list of exceptions). A designee can be a provider or other organization/individual capable of adhering to WaterSense's certification requirements, as relevant to the specific responsibility being designated.

Does the HCO intend to use designees in its fulfillment of any of the responsibilities related to WaterSense? Select one:

Yes                       No

If yes, please use the boxes in following sections to elaborate on the role of designees in meeting the applicable requirements. Also indicate the relevant supporting documentation that describes the policies the designee is required to follow and the HCO's procedures for overseeing the designee(s) and the fulfillment of their responsibilities, including the process by which the HCO will remove a designee if they fail to meet the HCO's requirements.

### *Section B.2: Independent Oversight (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.1.1):*

*The HCO shall maintain independent oversight procedures to ensure that the certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense is governed in a fair and impartial manner, including maintaining an independent oversight committee(s).*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the HCO has established procedures for independent oversight. If the information is included in the supporting documentation, use the left two

columns to indicate the title of the document and the section/page numbers. Otherwise, use the right column to briefly describe the HCO's procedures.

Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation	Section/Page Numbers	Briefly Describe Independent Oversight Related to WaterSense

*Section B.3: Quality Assurance (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.1.2):*

*The HCO shall implement quality assurance procedures that ensure that verifiers consistently inspect and document compliance in accordance with the WaterSense Specification for Homes, which includes the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the technical requirements of the HCO's WACM.*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the HCO has established procedures for each element of quality assurance. Indicate the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the procedures.

Quality Assurance Element	Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation	Section/Page Numbers
Labeled Home Auditing		
Verifier Qualification		
Verifier Discipline		
Complaint Resolution		
Quality Assurance Documentation		
Briefly describe how the elements of quality assurance (listed above) are conducted, including the use of designees to fulfill any of the requirements: _____		

*Section B.4: Verifier Training and Authorization (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.1.3)*

*The HCO shall train and authorize verifiers to verify homes in accordance with the WaterSense Specification for Homes, which includes the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the technical requirements of the HCO's WACM.*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the HCO has established procedures for verifier training and authorization. Indicate the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the procedures.

Verifier Training Element	Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation	Section/Page Numbers
Verifier Training		
Verifier Training Reciprocity		
Verifier Authorization		
Update Integration		
Briefly describe how the verifier training elements (listed above) are conducted, including the use of designees to fulfill any of the requirements: _____		

**Section B.5: Home Verification Protocols (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.1.4)**

*The HCO shall implement home verification protocols.*

Use the table below to identify the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the relevant verification procedures. Include reference to the document that describes the home verification protocols. If relying on a designee to develop and implement home verification, include reference to the procedures for evaluating and approving the designee’s(s’) home verification protocols. The HCO may offer builder partners the opportunity to participate in a sampling protocol if a builder partner intends to certify multiple homes within the same subdivision, planned community, or multifamily building.

Yes                       No

If Yes, include reference to the document that describes the sampling protocol in the table below.

Home Verification Requirement	Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation	Section/Page Numbers
Home Verification Protocols		
Sampling Protocol (If applicable)		
Verifier Adherence to Verification Protocols		
Verification of Builder Partnership with WaterSense		
Maintenance of Verification Documentation		
Briefly describe how the elements of home verification (listed above) are conducted, including the use of designees to fulfill any of the requirements:		

**Section B.6: Impartiality (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.1.5)**

*The HCO shall have a systematic method for ensuring financial, legal, and ethical impartiality as it pertains to verifying a home’s compliance with the WaterSense Specification for Homes and the HCO’s WACM, and as it pertains to issuing the WaterSense label. The HCO’s impartiality management strategy shall account for both organizational and individual conflicts of interest (COI). Organizational COI pertains to the organization(s) responsible for various aspects of home verification and certification, whereas individual COI pertains to a specific person involved in the verification or certification decision.*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the HCO has established the relevant procedures for impartiality. Indicate the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the procedures.

Impartiality Requirement	Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation	Section/Page Numbers
HCO Impartiality		
Verifier Impartiality		
Designee Impartiality (if applicable)		
Briefly describe how the impartiality requirements (listed above) are implemented:		

**Section B.7: Messaging and Reporting (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.1.6)**

The HCO shall ensure information flow from WaterSense to the HCO (messaging) and information flow from the HCO to WaterSense (reporting). The HCO shall also ensure that relevant information is conveyed in a timely manner between WaterSense and the HCO's designee(s), builders, and verifiers.

Use the table below to demonstrate that the HCO has established the relevant procedures for messaging and reporting. Indicate the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the procedures.

Messaging and Reporting Requirement	Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation	Section/Page Numbers
Centralized Messaging Structure		
Inquiry Response System		
Briefly describe how messaging and reporting are implemented, including requirements for designee and verifier reporting to the HCO:		

**Section B.8: Maintaining Final Authority of the WaterSense Label (WaterSense Home Certification System, Sections 4.2 and 5.3)**

The HCO may not relinquish its final authority over the certification decision and issuance of the WaterSense label. Briefly describe, or provide reference to documentation of, the HCO's procedures for maintaining final authority over the certification decision and issuance of the WaterSense label. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Section C: Certification Method Development Process (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.3)**

In developing the technical requirements included in the PCM, the HCO shall follow one of the three approaches outlined below to demonstrate that the requirements were developed following an open and transparent process.

Select the certification method development process that applies to the PCM under consideration and complete only the relevant section below.

- Utilizes an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved standard
- Follow requirements for the jurisdiction with authority (for programs run by public agencies)
- Demonstrate development in accordance with the certification method alternative development requirements (based on the ANSI Essential Requirements)

*Section C.1: Utilizes an ANSI approved standard*

Name of ANSI Standard: \_\_\_\_\_

List any deviations from the Standard’s requirements that the HCO intends to implement for the purpose of WaterSense certification: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Section C.2: Follow requirements for the jurisdiction with authority (for programs run by public agencies)*

Name of Jurisdiction with Authority: \_\_\_\_\_

Title and relevant section/page numbers of the administrative and transparency requirements for standards and policy development of the jurisdiction having authority (include a copy of the requirements with the application): \_\_\_\_\_

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*Section C.3: Development in accordance with the certification method alternative development requirements*

Complete the table below identifying the specific supporting documentation that describes how each criterion was met.

Criteria	Supporting Documentation	Section/Page Numbers
Openness		
Lack of dominance		
Balance		
Notification of certification method development		
Consideration of views and objections		
Consensus vote		
Appeals		

## Section D: Proposed Certification Method Requirements (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.4)

*The EPA shall evaluate the technical effectiveness of the PCM in accordance with its WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods to ensure that the PCM can differentiate homes that meet the efficiency requirement in the WaterSense Specification for Homes. Upon approval, the PCM becomes the HCO's WACM that can be used in conjunction with the Mandatory Checklist to verify a home's compliance with the WaterSense Specification for Homes.*

Review the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods* to understand how EPA will evaluate the technical effectiveness of the PCM.

- 1. Provide a copy of the PCM**
- 2. PCM Water Efficiency Thresholds and Criteria**

Identify the thresholds or criteria (e.g., prescriptive requirements, number of points, rating score, certification level) that the HCO intends to meet the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes* and that the HCO subsequently intends to designate for homes to earn the WaterSense label. Provide additional documentation if necessary.

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- 3. Nuances of the PCM for Consideration in EPA's technical evaluation.**

Describe any nuances of the PCM that will facilitate EPA's technical evaluation. Provide additional documentation if necessary. \_\_\_\_\_

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- 4. Provide Justification for Any Additional Water Savings Credit**

If the PCM includes requirements for features not specifically included or the HCO believes are not adequately accounted for in the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods*, submit technical justification for EPA's consideration in assessing appropriate credit for the requirement. This justification shall include:

- The expected effect on water use per household per day or per occupant per day for standard models or standard design.
- The expected water savings per household per day or per occupant per day from incorporation of more efficient product models or system design.
- Studies, data, and other supporting materials on the use of the specific design or technology in the field that support the HCO's claims.

