# Application for Home Certification Organization (HCO) Approval

A prospective Home Certification Organization (HCO) seeking approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) WaterSense® program to issue a label to homes that meet the WaterSense specification should complete this application. This document requests information on the HCO’s organizational structure to ensure it is capable of certifying and issuing the WaterSense label for homes. The EPA will use the completed application and any supporting materials to evaluate whether the HCO meets the organizational requirements described in the [*WaterSense Home Certification System*](https://www.epa.gov/watersense/certification-systems#tab-2).

If a prospective HCO is interested in applying, please contact the WaterSense Helpline at watersense@epa.gov prior to completing this application to have a preliminary discussion about the EPA’s requirements for HCOs.

After completing the application, an HCO may:

**Email this form and attachments to: OR Mail this form and attachments to:**

WaterSense Helpline EPA WaterSense Program watersense@epa.gov c/o ERG

2300 Wilson Boulevard

Suite 350

Arlington, VA 22201

For more information, please contact the WaterSense Helpline at (866) WTR-SENS (987-7367) or watersense@epa.gov.

## Section A: General HCO Information

Prospective Home Certification Organization Name:

How to Refer to the HCO on the EPA’s Website (if different):

Contact Name:

Address:

City:       State:       ZIP:

Telephone:       Fax:

Email:

HCO Website (if applicable):

### Provisional Approval

The EPA retains the right to provisionally approve an HCO for select requirements where an HCO requires modifications to fully adhere to the EPA’s organizational requirements, as set forth in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 (if applicable) of the *WaterSense Home Certification System*. Requirements that may be considered for provisional approval are indicated with an asterisk (\*) in the sections below. For any requirement for which an HCO is provisionally approved, the EPA will work with the HCO to develop a plan that outlines the conditions and timeline for full compliance with the requirements.

*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*](https://www.epa.gov/watersense/certification-systems#tab-2) before completing this application. For reference, the EPA has identified in parentheses the relevant section(s) of the *WaterSense Home Certification System* that detail the specific requirements.

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

The prospective HCO must submit in separate documentation the relevant procedures and include where the 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 prospective 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 certain 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 delegated.

Does the prospective HCO intend to use designee(s) in its fulfilment of any of the responsibilities related to WaterSense? Select one:

*[ ]* Yes *[ ]* No

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

Use the table below to demonstrate that the prospective HCO has established procedures for independent oversight. The HCO may demonstrate independent oversight by maintaining an independent oversight committee(s) or by maintaining an organizational infrastructure that prohibits personnel responsible for institutional oversight from being involved in routine oversight of the certification decision.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 prospective 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*.*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the prospective 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:** |
|       |

\*Eligible for provisional approval

### 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, *as well as any administrative practices used by the HCO for oversight of the certification process, reporting, or other communications.*

Use the table on the next page to demonstrate that the prospective 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:** |
|       |

\*Eligible for provisional approval

### 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 a reference to the document that describes the home verification protocols. If relying on a designee to develop and implement home verification, include a reference to the procedures for evaluating and approving each designee’s home verification protocols. The prospective HCO may offer WaterSense 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.

Is sampling allowed? Select one:

*[ ]* Yes *[ ]* No

If yes, include a 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 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 prospective 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 among WaterSense and the HCO’s designee(s), builders, and verifiers.*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the prospective 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:** |
|       |

\*Eligible for provisional approval

### 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 prospective HCO’s procedures for maintaining final authority over the certification decision and issuance of the WaterSense label.

|  |
| --- |
|       |

## Section C: HCO-Specific Procedures Used in Lieu of EPA-Provided Materials (*WaterSense Home Certification System*, Section 4.3)

An HCO may use its own EPA-approved procedures and tools in lieu of those provided by the EPA to verify that homes meet the requirements of the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*. To receive approval, the prospective HCO shall demonstrate that, using its own procedures and tools in place of EPA-provided materials, it can ensure the WaterSense label is only issued to homes that meet or exceed the efficiency and performance criteria of the *WaterSense* *Specification for Homes*.

Please describe how the prospective HCO intends to utilize any unique procedures or resources to ensure compliance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes and* explain how it is equivalent to materials provided by the EPA. If necessary, submit in separate documentation a copy of any alternative procedures and tools or information about where they can be accessed online.

|  |
| --- |
|       |