



WaterSense® Labeled New Homes



The WaterSense program is currently developing a labeling specification for single-family residential new homes. A draft specification has been released for public comment; builders will be able to label their new homes once it is finalized. The following describes the water-saving features of a WaterSense labeled new home of the future.

Residential water use accounts for more than half of publicly supplied water in the United States. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established WaterSense to protect the future of the nation's water supply and to promote water-efficient products and services with a simple, easy-to-identify label. EPA encourages homeowners to replace their older, inefficient toilets and faucets with more water-efficient models. As populations increase, our water resources will be taxed further. The next step is to build new homes that are designed to use significantly less water—inside and out.

To encourage homebuilders to construct water-efficient, single-family residences, EPA is developing a specification to label new homes that will be designed to reduce water consumption through efficient plumbing fixtures, hot water delivery, appliances, landscape design, and irrigation systems.

How Can Homes Save Water?

WaterSense labeled new homes will combine WaterSense labeled products with other water-efficient fixtures and practices to reduce the amount of water used by approximately 20 percent. In addition to WaterSense labeled toilets and faucets, these new homes include dishwashers and clothes washers with the ENERGY STAR label, if those appliances are installed when the home is built. WaterSense labeled new homes will incorporate a hot water distribution system that decreases the amount of time it takes for

hot water to reach the faucet or shower—waiting for hot water wastes thousands of gallons of water per year. Pressure regulator valves will be installed downstream of the water meter to reduce the pressure of the water going into the home. This reduces the maximum water flow from fixtures and the likelihood of leaking pipes and hoses.

Builders will have the option of developing an outdoor “water budget” and planning accordingly, or ensuring that the landscaping is designed efficiently. If the home has an outdoor irrigation system, it must be installed and audited by WaterSense irrigation partners to ensure efficiency.

How Much Water Can They Save?

While the amount of savings that can be realized by living in a WaterSense labeled new home is dependent upon the number of people living in the home and their water use habits, a WaterSense labeled new home will be designed and built to be about 20 percent more efficient than similar new homes being built today. At this level of efficiency, households can save more than 10,000 gallons of water per year. WaterSense labeled new homes will also realize significant energy savings, due to the reduced amount of hot water used.

When Can New Homes Be Labeled?

EPA is in the process of finalizing its specification for water-efficient single-family homes, including developing a system for independent, third-party inspection and certification of homes that apply for the WaterSense label. Once the specification is completed, EPA will start working with builder partners, who may begin constructing and promoting WaterSense labeled new homes as early as 2009. For more information, visit <www.epa.gov/watersense>.