



WaterSense[®] New Home Certification System

Version 1.1

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WaterSense New Home Certification System

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document, a supplement to the *WaterSense Program Guidelines*, outlines the process for certification and labeling of new homes in compliance with the current version of WaterSense New Home Specification (specification), including the general procedures for builder application and receipt of the certificate containing the WaterSense label. This document also describes the general application procedures and requirements for those parties involved in training, home inspection, certification, and issuance of the WaterSense label for new homes.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Builder Partner: A homebuilder who has committed to building new homes in accordance with the specification and providing other support as specified in this certification system. The builder shall signify such commitment by signing a WaterSense partnership agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Licensed Certification Provider: An organization that commits to hire or contract with inspectors, train inspectors, oversee new home inspections, and issue certification decisions for inspected homes. The certification provider shall signify such commitment by signing a licensing agreement and a WaterSense partnership agreement with EPA.

Licensing Agreement: The legal document between EPA and a certification provider that grants the certification provider access to and conditions for authorizing the use and distribution of the WaterSense label.

Partnership Agreement: The formal agreement between EPA and the builder and between EPA and the certification provider that delineates activities (partner pledges and EPA commitments) to be conducted by each party, program benefits, and exclusions.

Program Administrator: An independent organization that is approved by EPA to oversee certification providers. The program administrator trains certification providers in accordance with training materials prepared by WaterSense and approves and oversees the certification providers' certification process as it relates to WaterSense. Approved program administrators shall sign a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with EPA.

Water-Efficiency Home Inspector (Inspector): An individual who provides inspection services for new homes in accordance with the specification. The inspector shall be trained by a licensed certification provider in accordance with training materials prepared by WaterSense. In addition, the inspector shall work for or be contracted with a licensed certification provider.

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 compliance with the specification at the time of

inspection, the WaterSense label will be provided to the builder partner by a licensed certification provider 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 new home. References to the certificate are considered synonymous with the WaterSense label and as such, the terms may be used interchangeably throughout this document.

3.0 EFFECTIVE DATE

Version 1.1 of this *WaterSense New Home Certification System* (new home certification system) shall be effective on January 1, 2013. All parties wishing to certify new homes to WaterSense criteria shall comply with the requirements of this version of the new home certification system by no later than January 1, 2013, however, approval and licensure of existing program administrators and licensed certification providers, respectively, shall remain in full force and effect.

4.0 OVERVIEW OF CERTIFICATION PROCESS

- EPA develops criteria for the inspection, labeling, and oversight of new homes for the WaterSense program.
- Program administrator submits MOA and supporting documentation to EPA.
- EPA evaluates and approves program administrator.
- Program administrator evaluates, trains, and approves certification providers.
- Certification provider signs partnership agreement and licensing agreement with EPA.
- EPA licenses certification provider and supplies the certificate template with the WaterSense label.
- Program administrator provides WaterSense program materials to licensed certification provider.
- Licensed certification provider hires, trains, and oversees inspectors.
- Builders sign partnership agreements with EPA.
- Builder partners request certification for individual homes from licensed certification provider.
- Inspector evaluates home and submits documentation to licensed certification provider.
- Licensed certification provider issues WaterSense label to builder partner.
- Licensed certification provider reports quarterly to EPA on number and location of WaterSense labeled new homes.

5.0 PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

WaterSense approves program administrators to evaluate, approve, and oversee certification providers. In addition, program administrators shall provide EPA ongoing support as described in this section.

A summary of the program administrator's roles and responsibilities, as described in this section, is provided in Table 1 on page 22.

5.1 Application Procedures for Program Administrators

A program administrator shall submit an application to EPA to approve and oversee certification providers for WaterSense. The application shall include the following documentation:

5.1.1 Declaration of Intent

Applicant program administrators shall provide a letter declaring their intent to participate in the WaterSense program as a program administrator. The letter shall contain declarations and/or attached documentation to support the following requirements:

5.1.1.1 Demonstrate Impartial Governance

The organization shall prove impartial governance by demonstrating that it:

- Does not directly inspect or certify new homes for the WaterSense program or issue the WaterSense label to builder partners;
- Maintains open membership for all potential licensed certification providers; and
- Has established a governing board of directors or executive committee composed of a diverse group of members representing various aspects of the home building industry, which may include, but is not limited to, water-efficiency and home-energy experts, architects, engineers, landscape designers, certification providers for other green building programs, and/or other stakeholders as appropriate.

5.1.1.2 Demonstrate Policies and Procedures Governing Oversight of Certification Providers

The organization shall provide documentation that its by-laws, governing policies, and procedures are applicable and effective for the approval and oversight of certification providers that provide services for the WaterSense program.

The organization shall provide documentation of its policies and procedures related to the oversight of certification providers, including:

- A copy of its technical standards for approval of and oversight procedures for certification providers.
- Record-keeping procedures to document and track certification providers.
- Quality control procedures for managing certification providers, including procedures for disciplining certification providers that do not follow the quality control procedures.
- Procedures to investigate the complaints, dismissal, and appeals of certification providers.
- A business code of ethics to which certification providers must agree to abide.
- A complaint resolution process for the certification provider and the program administrator.

- Documentation of its policies and procedures for ensuring that each certification provider meets the requirements specified in Section 5.3.2.
- Any other specific quality assurance steps that the program administrator shall undertake to ensure the quality of the certification provider's work.

5.1.2 Memorandum of Agreement

The application shall be accompanied by a signed copy of the MOA, which outlines the terms and conditions for providing program administration services for WaterSense. Contact the WaterSense Helpline at (866) WTR-SENS (987-7367) or watersense@epa.gov for a copy of the MOA.

5.1.3 Point of Contact

The program administrator shall designate a point of contact in its application and shall provide that individual's contact information. This point of contact is responsible for communicating and disseminating information to and from EPA as appropriate or requested regarding the WaterSense program.

5.2 EPA Approval of Program Administrators

Upon receipt and evaluation of the application and supporting documentation, if all criteria are satisfactorily met, EPA will notify the program administrator that it has been approved to provide services for WaterSense and will return a signed and executed copy of the MOA. In addition, EPA will provide the approved program administrator with the inspector training materials, inspection guidance, and inspection forms to disseminate to licensed certification providers.

Once EPA has approved and notified a program administrator, EPA will post the program administrator's contact information, including the designated point of contact, on the WaterSense website. The program administrator is then able to begin recruiting and approving certification providers in accordance with this document.

5.3 Responsibilities of Program Administrators

5.3.1 Training of Certification Providers

The program administrator is required to conduct training sessions for certification providers, which shall instruct certification providers' quality assurance designees on how to train their inspectors to properly conduct and document new home inspections. The program administrator shall inform potential licensed certification providers of when and where the training will be offered. The program administrator shall supply the certification provider with documentation that the training requirement was fulfilled.

In the event of a modification to the specification, program administrators shall ensure and document that the quality assurance designee for each of its existing licensed

certification providers is trained in accordance with the most current version of the specification. This training shall occur by no later than the specification's effective date or, if after the specification's effective date, prior to the licensed certification provider issuing any additional WaterSense labels for new homes. The program administrator shall supply the certification provider with documentation that training in accordance with the revised specification was fulfilled.

5.3.2 Approval of Certification Providers

Upon receipt of a certification provider's application to offer services for WaterSense, the program administrator shall evaluate the certification provider's capability and competence to provide training of its inspectors, oversee the inspections, and issue the WaterSense label. This may include, but is not limited to, an evaluation of the certification provider's:

- Quality assurance designee, all relevant contact information, his or her minimum responsibilities outlined in Section 6.1.1 of this document, and a copy of a formal agreement between the certification provider and quality assurance designee.
- Documentation of the quality assurance designee(s)'s attendance at a certification provider training session.
- Procedures for ensuring the inspectors' ability to perform accurate inspections, including a requirement that the certification provider's quality assurance designee re-inspect/co-inspect each inspector's first three inspections as well as one home or 1 percent of the certified homes annually thereafter, whichever is greater.
- Inspector conflict of interest disclosure, which shall be accompanied by an agreement to provide advanced disclosure of any conflicts to the builder partner/homeowner.
- Inspection record-keeping provisions including the quality assurance record for each home (copies of the documentation provided by the inspectors) and a registry of all of the certification provider's inspectors that have successfully completed training on the most current version of the WaterSense New Home Specification.
- Inspector discipline provisions, which shall include, at a minimum, progressive discipline procedures including probation, suspension, and termination.
- Inspector quality control procedures, including the minimum oversight requirements as described in Section 6.3.3 of this document.
- Complaint resolution process, including: documentation of procedures to respond to and resolve complaints involving the inspections and/or certifications; a requirement to inform clients of the complaint resolution process; and maintenance for a minimum of three years of records of all complaints received and response to complaints.

Upon successful completion of the evaluation, the program administrator shall supply the certification provider with documentation of approval to submit to EPA.

5.3.3 Verifying Partnership and Licensure of Approved Certification Providers

Once EPA has licensed a certification provider to offer services for WaterSense, the certification provider shall submit proof of both the executed partnership and licensing agreements to the program administrator that originally provided its approval. This indicates to the program administrator that the certification provider has completed all of the requirements necessary to offer services for WaterSense. The program administrator shall then supply the certification provider with the inspector training materials, inspection guidance, and inspection forms. The program administrator shall verify the certification provider's licensure by checking the list of licensed certification providers maintained on the WaterSense website.

5.4 Ongoing Support

5.4.1 Maintain Registry of Approved Licensed Certification Providers

Program administrators shall maintain a registry of the licensed certification providers they have approved to certify new homes to the WaterSense specification. Program administrators should only add certification providers to this registry once the certification provider has submitted proof of EPA partnership and licensure. The registry should include the licensed certification provider's contact information.

The registry of licensed certification providers shall be kept up to date to reflect only those licensed certification providers who have maintained their status and are currently approved to certify homes in accordance with the most current version of the specification. In the event of a modification to the specification, program administrators shall revise this registry to include and reflect only those licensed certification providers that have completed training in accordance with the most current version of specification per Section 5.3.1 above.

Program administrators shall notify EPA within 30 days of the removal of any licensed certification providers from its registry.

5.4.2 Oversee Licensed Certification Providers

The program administrator is responsible for overseeing the licensed certification providers in accordance with its technical standards as outlined in Section 5.1.1.2. This may include but is not limited to:

- Annually reviewing files from all of the licensed certification providers it approved to ensure that the proper quality assurance is being conducted, including an evaluation that the certification provider is meeting its oversight responsibilities as outlined in Section 6.3.3 of this document.
- Periodically accompanying licensed certification providers on any routine field assessment of inspections conducted for the WaterSense label.

If the program administrator discovers any issues during its oversight activities or otherwise, it shall institute its process for disciplining licensed certification providers. If

the discipline procedures do not result in corrective action to the satisfaction of the program administrator, the program administrator shall contact EPA. EPA will investigate the issue and determine what further action is necessary, including and up to termination of the certification provider's partnership and licensing agreements.

5.4.3 Update Licensed Certification Providers of Any Relevant WaterSense Specification Changes

Program administrators shall maintain regular communication with its licensed certification providers, informing them of any changes to the specification criteria and any implications for the licensed certification providers' current status. EPA will communicate any program changes directly to the program administrator.

6.0 PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSED CERTIFICATION PROVIDERS

Licensed certification providers hire or contract with inspectors and oversee the inspection of new homes for WaterSense builder partners. Licensed certification providers also conduct training of inspectors in accordance with training materials prepared by WaterSense. Licensed certification providers are responsible for providing the builder partner with the WaterSense label for each certified new home and providing EPA with ongoing support as described in this section.

A summary of the licensed certification provider's roles and responsibilities, as described in this section, is provided in Table 2 on page 23.

6.1 Procedures for Becoming a Licensed Certification Provider

6.1.1 Designate personnel responsible for quality assurance

WaterSense requires each licensed certification provider to have at least one quality assurance designee. This person(s) shall be named in the application to both the program administrator and the partnership agreement with EPA. The quality assurance designee is responsible for:

- Training the licensed certification provider's inspectors on how to properly conduct and document inspections and maintaining documentation of trainings.
- Re-inspecting/co-inspecting each inspector's first three probationary inspections.
- Annually re-inspecting/co-inspecting one home or 1 percent of the homes each inspector has inspected for WaterSense, whichever is greater.
- Annually conducting a comprehensive review of 10 percent of each inspector's files.
- Maintaining the licensed certification provider's quality assurance files.
- Coordinating with the program administrator as required on all quality assurance activity oversight.

The quality assurance designee shall meet the following requirements:

- Shall not perform quality assurance functions for WaterSense for any inspections that he or she conducts or in which he or she is involved;
- Shall have a minimum of one year of experience conducting inspections for WaterSense or another green building program; and
- Shall have a formal agreement with the licensed certification provider agreeing to comply with all of the quality assurance oversight activities required by the program administrator.

6.1.2 Attend Certification Provider Training Session

In order for an organization to become a licensed certification provider for WaterSense, all individuals responsible for quality assurance from the certification provider's organization, including the quality assurance designee, shall attend a training session. Training will be conducted either by EPA or an EPA-approved program administrator. The program administrator shall provide the certification provider with documentation that the training requirement was fulfilled. This documentation shall be submitted to the program administrator with the application to become a WaterSense licensed certification provider. A list of approved program administrators is available on the WaterSense website.

In the event of a modification to the specification, all individuals responsible for quality assurance from the licensed certification provider's organization, including the quality assurance designee, shall be retrained on the requirements of the most current version of the specification by the specification's effective date or prior to issuing any additional new home certifications for WaterSense. Training will be conducted either by EPA or an EPA-approved program administrator. The program administrator shall supply the licensed certification provider with documentation that the training in accordance with the most current specification was fulfilled.

6.1.3 Submit Application to a Program Administrator

Once the quality assurance designee has completed the certification provider training, the certification provider shall submit an application to an approved program administrator. Each program administrator will have its own requirements and approval process and should be contacted directly for more information. Upon successful completion of the evaluation, the program administrator shall supply the certification provider with documentation of approval.

6.1.4 Receive Approval From EPA

6.1.4.1 Application and Agreements

Once the certification provider is approved by the program administrator, the certification provider shall submit a signed partnership agreement and a signed licensing agreement to EPA to offer services for WaterSense. The partnership and licensing agreements are available on the WaterSense website. These agreements shall be accompanied with documentation of approval from an approved program administrator. The certification provider shall identify the quality assurance designee(s) and a point of contact on the

partnership agreement. The point of contact can be different than the quality assurance designee and is responsible for the communication and dissemination of information to and from EPA regarding the certification provider's services for the WaterSense program.

6.1.4.2 Obtaining the WaterSense label

Once EPA receives the signed partnership and licensing agreements and reviews the supporting documentation, it will sign the partnership and licensing agreements and return copies to the certification provider along with an electronic copy of the certificate and sticker templates, which contain the WaterSense label.

The receipt of the certificate template and copies of the executed agreements signifies the approval and licensure of the certification provider. EPA will maintain a listing of licensed certification providers on the WaterSense website. Builder partners will contact licensed certification providers directly to initiate the inspection, certification, and labeling process.

6.1.4.3 Obtaining Materials to Train Inspectors

Upon licensure to provide services for WaterSense, the certification provider shall submit proof of the executed partnership and licensing agreements to the program administrator that originally provided its approval. This indicates to the program administrator that the licensed certification provider has completed all of the requirements necessary to offer services for WaterSense labeled new homes. The program administrator will then supply the licensed certification provider with inspector training materials, inspection guidance, and inspection forms. The licensed certification provider shall use these materials to train its inspectors that wish to inspect new homes for WaterSense.

In the event of a modification to the specification, EPA will provide the program administrator with revised inspector training materials, inspection guidance, and forms. The program administrator shall provide the licensed certification provider with these materials upon retraining in accordance with the most current version of the specification. The licensed certification provider shall use these materials to train its inspectors that wish to continue to inspect new homes for WaterSense.

With the receipt of the inspector training materials, inspection guidance, and inspection forms, the licensed certification provider can begin training its inspectors and offering its inspection and certification services to WaterSense builder partners.

6.2 Responsibility of a Licensed Certification Provider

6.2.1 Inspector Administration and Training

The licensed certification provider is responsible for hiring or contracting with inspectors to complete the inspection of new homes for the WaterSense label. As part of the administration of its inspectors, the licensed certification provider shall provide training in accordance with inspector training materials prepared by WaterSense and provided by

the program administrator. The licensed certification provider's quality assurance designee shall keep documentation of all its inspectors' training and shall provide records of training to the program administrator upon request. The licensed certification provider shall also provide those inspectors that completed the training with the materials and guidance necessary to conduct the inspections. The materials shall only be supplied to those inspectors who have successfully completed the required training.

In the event of a modification to the specification, licensed certification providers shall retrain their inspectors in accordance with the most current version of the specification. This training shall occur by no later than the specification's effective date or, if after the specification's effective date, prior to the inspector inspecting any additional new homes for the WaterSense label. The licensed certification provider's quality assurance designee shall keep documentation of all its inspectors' training and shall provide records of training to the program administrator upon request. The licensed certification provider shall also provide the inspectors that completed the training with the materials and guidance necessary to conduct the inspections in accordance with the revised specification. The materials shall only be supplied to those inspectors who have successfully completed the required training.

6.2.2 Application and Verification of Builder Partnership Agreement With EPA

The builder partner shall apply for certification and the WaterSense label on an individual home basis. To initiate the inspection and certification process, the builder partner shall contact a licensed certification provider and designate each home it intends to have certified. The licensed certification provider will provide the builder partner with a list of inspectors and/or will assign the builder partner an inspector to coordinate the inspection. Only inspectors who have successfully completed training in accordance with the specification shall be provided or assigned to the builder partner. The payment for certification services is not to be based on the home passing the inspection.

As a condition for applying to have their home(s) certified and labeled for conformance to the specification, builder partners are required to have a signed WaterSense partnership agreement. The licensed certification provider shall verify that this partnership agreement is in place (and signed by both parties) prior to issuing the WaterSense label. To verify the partnership agreement, the licensed certification provider should check the WaterSense website for a current list of builder partners. If the builder is not listed on the WaterSense website, the licensed certification provider can verify the partnership agreement by contacting the WaterSense Helpline at (866) WTR-SENS (987-7367) or watersense@epa.gov.

6.2.3 Issuing the WaterSense label

Once the inspector has completed the inspection, he or she will submit copies of the inspection checklists and supporting documentation to the licensed certification provider. Based on the inspection documentation, the licensed certification provider will make the certification decision.

If the builder partner intends to apply for the WaterSense label on multiple homes within the same subdivision, planned community, or multi-family building the licensed certification provider may offer builder partners the opportunity to participate in a sampling protocol, as described in Section 7.2.2 of this document. If this option is exercised, the inspector will inform the licensed certification provider of the homes that the relevant inspection covers. Based on the inspection documentation provided for the sample home, the licensed certification provider will make the certification decision for all of the homes covered by that inspection.

Once the licensed certification provider determines that the new home(s) meets all of the criteria contained in the specification, the licensed certification provider will fill out the certificate for each certified new home, which includes:

- A certification statement that the new home has been certified to meet the most current version of the specification.
- The name of the builder partner.
- The names of the inspector and the licensed certification provider's authorized representative.
- The address or lot number of the certified new home or building.
- The date of inspection (for homes included in a sampling protocol, this date shall be the date that the sample home was inspected).

Both the inspector that conducted the inspection and the licensed certification provider's authorized representative will sign the certificate, and the licensed certification provider will supply the builder partner with an original signed copy. The certificate may be signed with an electronic signature or stamp.

At the time the WaterSense label is issued, the licensed certification provider will also supply the builder partner with guidelines on proper use of the marks.

6.3 Ongoing Support

6.3.1 Maintain Registry of Inspectors

The licensed certification provider shall maintain a registry of all of the inspectors it hires or contracts with that have successfully completed training to conduct new home inspections for WaterSense builder partners. This registry should include records of training and other documentation of inspectors' qualifications as appropriate.

In the event of a modification to the specification, program administrators shall revise this registry to include and reflect only those inspectors who have completed training in accordance with the most current specification per Section 6.2.1 above.

6.3.2 Collect Data on Certified New Homes

The licensed certification provider shall report at least quarterly to EPA regarding the new homes that they have certified. EPA will supply the licensed certification provider with a WaterSense labeled new home notification form. At a minimum, the licensed certification provider will report labeled homes quarterly in a format approved by EPA.

6.3.3 Oversee Inspections and Maintain Records of Complaints

6.3.3.1 General Oversight

The licensed certification provider's quality assurance designee will oversee inspectors in accordance with its own process relevant to the evaluation of the inspector's capability and competence to inspect new homes for WaterSense, including the activities outlined in Section 6.1.1.

6.3.3.2 Oversight for Homes Included in a Sampling Protocol

Every WaterSense labeled new home, regardless of whether it was directly inspected or certified as part of a sampling protocol, is subject to ongoing surveillance conducted by the licensed certification provider's quality assurance designee. If the inspector or his or her licensed certification provider discovers nonconformance with the specification requirements during any in-home re-inspection/co-inspection prior to its sale or initial occupancy, the licensed certification provider shall reserve the right to revoke the builder partner's sampling eligibility and require a direct inspection of each home, in addition to handling the issues in accordance with Section 9.0 of this document. A builder partner can only become re-eligible for sampling after the inspector has directly inspected and the licensed certification provider has certified an additional seven homes within the subdivision, planned community, or multi-family building.

6.3.3.3 Conflicts of Interest Disclosure

The inspectors are required to disclose to the licensed certification provider any existing or potential conflicts of interest associated with a particular home inspection.

The licensed certification provider shall ensure that all disclosures are adequately addressed by its quality control procedures. Examples of conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Providing consulting services for the home.
- Acting as the seller of the home or the seller's agent.
- Acting as the mortgagor for some portion of the financed payments on the home.
- Supplying or installing products to facilitate the home meeting the specification criteria.

EPA allows the builder partner and/or homeowner to waive conflicts of interest after evaluation of the disclosure from the licensed certification provider. If the builder partner or homeowner grants a waiver, the inspector may inspect the home for WaterSense.

6.3.3.4 Handling Complaints

If complaints are issued and warrant a response, the licensed certification provider shall follow its complaint resolution policies and procedures. This shall include a mechanism for ensuring and enforcing necessary corrective action and discipline of the affected

inspector, as appropriate. The licensed certification provider may also increase the frequency of re-inspections/co-inspections conducted for the affected inspector.

6.3.3.5 Allow EPA to Accompany Licensed Certification Provider on Routine Assessments of WaterSense Inspections

EPA or its designee reserves the right to conduct periodic in-home inspections of WaterSense labeled new homes prior to their sale or initial occupancy and reviews of Web and other certification references and WaterSense label usages. In the case of an in-home inspection, EPA will seek permission and coordinate the inspection with the builder partner and the home's inspector and licensed certification provider, so as not to delay the certification process. If nonconformities with the specification are identified, EPA will notify the licensed certification provider and/or the builder partner and engage in corrective or other necessary action in accordance with Section 9.0 of this document.

6.3.3.6 Update Inspectors on Relevant WaterSense Program Changes

Licensed certification providers shall maintain regular communication with their inspectors, informing them of any changes to the training or inspection requirements that might affect their ability to perform inspections for WaterSense builder partners. The licensed certification provider shall communicate such changes to its inspectors within 30 days of notification from either EPA or the program administrator. Inspectors shall implement the changes within 90 days of notification by the licensed certification provider.

7.0 PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR WATER-EFFICIENCY HOME INSPECTORS

Inspectors inspect new homes in accordance with the criteria contained in the specification. To provide inspection services for WaterSense builder partners, an inspector shall:

- Complete the training requirements as outlined in this section.
- Work for, or contract with, a certification provider that is licensed by EPA.
- Disclose existing or potential conflicts of interest to the licensed certification provider for all inspections related to WaterSense.

Other responsibilities of inspectors are also outlined in this section.

A summary of the inspector's roles and responsibilities, as described in this section, is provided in Table 3 on page 25.

7.1 Inspector Training and Administration

7.1.1 Training of Inspectors

An inspector shall demonstrate a knowledge base and skill set to conduct inspections of new homes to WaterSense criteria. As part of that demonstration, the inspector shall attend training conducted by a licensed certification provider's quality assurance

designee. EPA maintains a listing of licensed certification providers on the WaterSense website.

In the event of a modification to the specification, inspectors shall attend training conducted by the licensed certification provider in accordance with the most current version of the specification. This training shall occur by no later than the specification's effective date or, if after the specification's effective date, prior to the inspector inspecting any additional new homes for WaterSense. The licensed certification provider will provide the inspector with documentation of training. The licensed certification provider will also provide the inspectors who completed the training with the materials and guidance necessary to conduct the inspections in accordance with the revised specification. The materials will only be supplied to those inspectors who have successfully completed the required training.

7.1.2 Employment of Inspectors

To provide inspections of new homes for WaterSense builder partners, inspectors who have completed the required training shall work for, or contract with, a licensed certification provider. A licensed certification provider should be contacted directly for information on becoming a water-efficiency home inspector. A list of licensed certification providers is maintained on the WaterSense website.

In addition, the inspector shall disclose to the licensed certification provider any existing or potential conflicts of interest as described in Section 6.3.3.3 of this document.

7.2 New Home Inspection

7.2.1 General Procedures

EPA has prepared inspection guidance and inspection checklists containing the inspection criteria and minimum features a home shall possess in order for it to meet the criteria contained in the specification. The licensed certification provider will supply these materials to the inspector. The inspector shall utilize the inspection checklist, or other method of documentation that contains all of the minimum information in the inspection checklist, to document the home's water-efficiency features and compliance with the specification's criteria. Prior to the inspection, the inspector shall provide the builder partner with copies of the forms and materials he or she intends to use as part of the inspection process.

Each of the new home evaluation aspects is further described in the specification and *Inspection Guidelines for WaterSense Labeled New Homes*. If the inspector determines the new home does not conform in any area, and if corrective actions are appropriate and warranted, the inspector can work directly with the builder partner to ensure that the nonconformity is corrected before finalizing the inspection. All nonconformities and corrective actions shall be noted as part of the inspection documentation.

7.2.2 Procedures for Sampling Homes

The licensed certification provider may offer builder partners the opportunity to participate in a sampling protocol if they intend to have multiple homes certified within the same subdivision, planned community, or multi-family building. For the builder to be eligible to participate in a sampling protocol, the licensed certification provider must offer sampling, and the inspector must directly inspect and the licensed certification provider must certify the builder partner's first seven homes within the subdivision, planned community, or multi-family building. These inspections will be conducted following the general procedures outlined in Section 7.2.1

Upon the builder partner's fulfillment of the sampling protocol eligibility requirements, the inspector shall institute the following process for sampling:

- Randomly select one home for sampling from every batch of seven homes that are scheduled for completion within 30 days of one another.
- Inspect the sample home in accordance with the general procedures described in Section 7.2.1 of this document.
- For every home or building with an irrigation system installed, verify that the builder partner had the irrigation system audited by a WaterSense irrigation partner, regardless of whether the home is being directly inspected or certified as part of the sampling protocol.

If the randomly selected home does not successfully pass the inspection, the licensed certification provider cannot certify any additional homes for the builder partner using the sampling protocol until seven new homes have been directly inspected and certified. All homes receiving certification through the sampling protocol are subject to the oversight procedures in Section 6.3.3.2.

7.3 Notify Licensed Certification Provider of New Home Inspections

Upon inspection, the inspector will notify and supply the licensed certification provider with a copy of all relevant paperwork documenting the new home's inspection. In the case of homes included in a sampling protocol, the inspector will inform the licensed certification provider of the homes that the relevant inspection covers. At a minimum, the inspector shall report the following information to the licensed certification provider for each inspected new home:

- Builder partner contact information.
- Address (or lot number) of inspected new home (and address or lot number of any new homes covered by a relevant sampling protocol).
- Documentation of the home's compliance with the requirements contained in the specification (i.e., a completed inspection checklist)—this includes any initial nonconformities identified and corrective actions taken.
- Name and contact information for the inspector.
- Inspection date(s).

Based on the inspection documentation provided by the inspector, the licensed certification provider shall make the certification decision. If the new home has been determined to meet all of the criteria contained in the specification, both the inspector

that conducted the inspection and the licensed certification provider's authorized representative signs the certificate(s). The certificate may be signed with an electronic signature or stamp. The licensed certification provider shall issue the signed certificate to the builder partner.

7.4 Ongoing Support

7.4.1 Maintain File of Inspected Homes

The inspector is responsible for maintaining a file of all of the homes he or she has inspected for a minimum of three years. For each home, the file shall contain, at a minimum, the information submitted to the licensed certification provider and listed in Section 7.3. above. The inspector shall submit to an annual comprehensive review of a minimum of 10 percent of his or her files by the licensed certification provider's quality assurance designee, as part of the licensed certification provider's quality assurance process.

7.4.2 Maintain Status as Required by Licensed Certification Provider

To maintain status as an inspector for WaterSense labeled new homes, the inspector shall maintain any training and other requirements specified by the licensed certification provider.

8.0 PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR BUILDER PARTNERS

Builder partners construct water-efficient new homes that meet or exceed the criteria contained in the specification.

A summary of the builder partner's roles and responsibilities, as described in this section, is provided in Table 4 on page 26.

8.1 Partnership Agreement With EPA

Builders shall sign a partnership agreement with EPA as described in Section 6.0 of the *WaterSense Program Guidelines* if they wish to obtain the WaterSense label for their homes.

8.2 New Home Certification and Labeling

Achieving and using the WaterSense label in conjunction with a water-efficient new home is contingent upon inspection and certification that the home meets the minimum criteria contained in the specification.

8.2.1 Application to a Licensed Certification Provider

The builder partner shall apply for certification on an individual home basis. To initiate the inspection and certification process, the builder partner shall contact a licensed

certification provider, as described in Section 6.2.1 of this document. A list of licensed certification providers will be maintained on the WaterSense website.

Builder partners who intend to certify multiple homes within the same subdivision, planned community, or multi-family building may be eligible to participate in a sampling protocol, as offered and coordinated by the licensed certification provider. If the licensed certification provider offers sampling, the builder partner shall meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Section 7.2.2.

The builder partner is responsible for paying the licensed certification provider for all services and costs associated with the new home inspection, certification, and issuance of the WaterSense label.

8.2.2 New Home Certification and Labeling

The WaterSense label indicates that the new home has been certified to conform to the specification. At the time the WaterSense label is issued, the licensed certification provider will also supply the builder partner with guidance on proper use of the label. The builder partner is then allowed to advertise that the new home conforms to the specification. Any promotion of the WaterSense label shall be directly related to the certified new home.

8.2.3 Builder Partner Registry

EPA will maintain a list of builder partners who have built or plan to build WaterSense labeled new homes. As part of the partnership agreement with EPA, the builder will provide EPA with:

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

EPA will post this information on its builder partner registry. The registry will also include the location(s) (city, state) and number of WaterSense labeled new homes for each builder partner.

8.2.4 Ongoing Surveillance

EPA or its designee reserves the right to conduct periodic in-home inspections of labeled homes prior to their sale or initial occupancy and to periodically review Web and other certification references and WaterSense label usages. In the case of an in-home inspection, EPA will seek permission and coordinate the inspection with the builder partner and the home's inspector and licensed certification provider, so as not to delay the certification process. If nonconformities with the specification are identified, EPA will notify the licensed certification provider and/or the builder partner and will engage in corrective or other necessary action in accordance with Section 9.0 of this document.

9.0 SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF THE WATERSENSE LABEL FROM NEW HOMES

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

- Failure of a certified home to pass a re-inspection, where simple corrective action is unable to resolve the nonconformance.
- Receipt of formal complaints from home buyers or other interested parties indicating that the certified new home was generally misrepresented (e.g., multiple features do not comply with the specification).
- Instances where the licensed certification provider discovers that a builder is fraudulently or falsely claiming that its homes have been certified and labeled in accordance with the specification and this certification system.

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 or reference to the WaterSense label.

Nonconformance can be determined through notification to EPA by the licensed certification provider as described above. EPA might also discover nonconformance or improper use or reference to the WaterSense label from its stakeholders, during its own in-home inspections, or during periodic reviews of certification and label usage. If EPA discovers nonconformance or certification and labeling issues, it will notify the licensed certification provider 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 EPA. During the period of suspension, the builder partner is prohibited from using the WaterSense label in conjunction with the home in question and on any new home built after the issuance of a suspension, until such time as EPA indicates the suspension can be removed. The licensed certification provider will assist EPA as necessary by removing 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 EPA's approval, reissuing the WaterSense label to the builder partner for the home in question. The builder partner is responsible for paying the licensed certification provider for all services and costs associated with the necessary corrective action or suspension and reinstatement of a WaterSense label.

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, EPA will withdraw the WaterSense label from all of the builder partner's certified new homes that have not yet been sold. EPA will notify the builder partner that the certification and WaterSense label are being withdrawn. If the WaterSense label is withdrawn for any reason, EPA will require that the builder partner cease to advertise the certification of its homes, and the label shall be eliminated immediately from new homes not already sold. EPA will inform the licensed certification provider that the builder partner is no longer allowed to use or receive the WaterSense label and will decide whether termination of the partnership agreement or other corrective action is warranted. The licensed certification provider will assist EPA as

necessary by removing the WaterSense label from all certified new homes that have not yet been sold and will not issue any new WaterSense labels to the builder partner. The builder partner is responsible for paying the licensed certification provider for all services and costs associated with the withdrawal of the WaterSense label.

Figure 1. New Home Certification Process

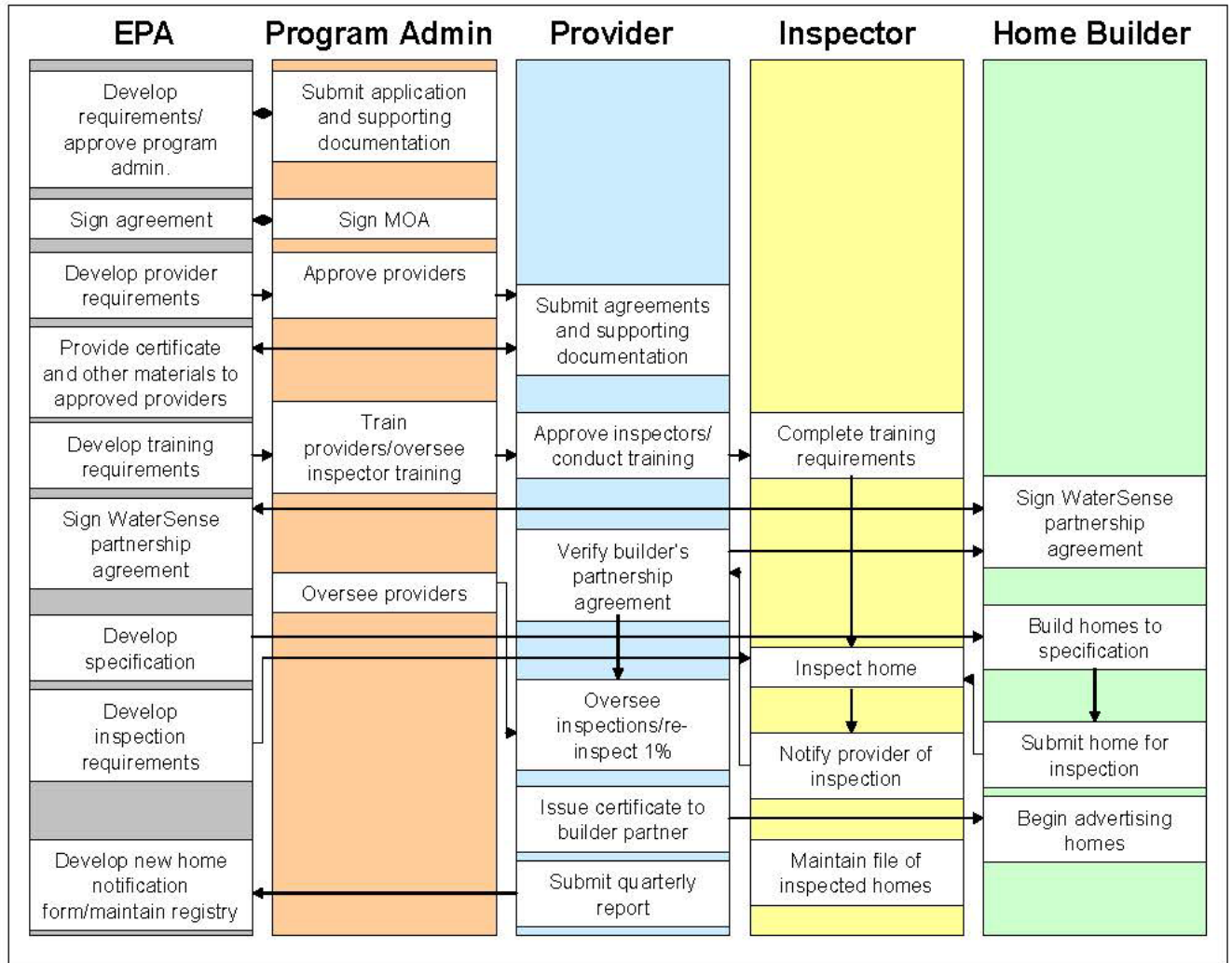


Table 1. Summary of Program Administrator Roles and Responsibilities

Role/Responsibility	Additional Information or Resources
Submit letter of intent and supporting documentation to EPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Application materials can be submitted to watersense@epa.gov.
Enter into an MOA with EPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organizations can contact the WaterSense Helpline, watersense@epa.gov, to obtain a copy of the MOA.
Train certification provider's quality assurance designees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will provide program administrators with certification provider training materials. ➤ Program administrator will supply certification providers with documentation of training.
Evaluate and approve trained certification providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Program administrator will supply certification provider with documentation of approval.
Verify certification provider's partnership and licensure by EPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Program administrator will request documentation from certification provider. ➤ EPA will maintain a list of licensed certification providers on the WaterSense website. ➤ Contact the WaterSense Helpline, watersense@epa.gov, if the certification provider is not listed on website.
Supply licensed certification provider with inspector training materials and inspection forms and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will provide program administrator with inspector training materials, inspection forms and guidance.
Maintain registry of approved certification providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Program administrator will add licensed certification providers to registry only upon proof of EPA partnership and licensure.
Oversee licensed certification providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Program administrator will conduct oversight in accordance with its own technical standards for approval and oversight. ➤ Program administrator will institute certification provider discipline procedures, as necessary, in accordance with its own internal policies and procedures.
Update licensed certification providers on relevant WaterSense specification or certification system changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will communicate any changes to program administrator.

Table 2. Summary of Licensed Certification Provider Roles and Responsibilities

Role/Responsibility	Additional Information or Resources
Attend certification provider training conducted by EPA or an EPA-approved program administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This requirement is applicable to certification provider's quality assurance designee(s). ➤ EPA and/or program administrators will announce opportunities for certification provider training. ➤ EPA will maintain a list of approved program administrators on the WaterSense website. ➤ Program administrator will provide documentation of training.
Designate quality assurance personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Name designee in application to program administrator and partnership agreement with EPA.
Submit application to program administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will maintain a list of approved program administrators on WaterSense website. ➤ Program administrator will supply certification provider with documentation of approval.
Seek licensure and partnership with EPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will post partnership and licensing agreements on WaterSense website. ➤ Agreements can be submitted to watersense@epa.gov. ➤ Licensed certification providers will accompany agreements with documentation of program administrator approval.
Receive WaterSense labeled new home certificate template from EPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Template will be accompanied by executed agreements and a licensed certification provider tool kit.
Provide program administrator with proof of licensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Program administrator will supply licensed certification provider with inspector training materials and inspection forms and guidance.
Hire or contract with and train inspectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Licensed certification providers will conduct training in accordance with materials provided by the program administrator. ➤ Licensed certification provider's quality assurance designee must track inspector training.
Provide inspectors with inspection materials and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inspection materials and guidance can be obtained from the program administrator.
Accept applications from builder, verify builder partnership agreement, provide/assign an inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Builder partners must designate individual homes for certification and labeling. ➤ EPA maintains a list of builder partners on the WaterSense website.
Review inspection documentation and make certification decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Builder partners can correct nonconformities, provided they are identified and corrective action is taken.
Fill out, sign, and issue certificate to builder partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Licensed certification providers will complete the WaterSense labeled new home certificate template provided by EPA. ➤ Inspector must also sign the certificate.
Provide builder partner with guidance on proper label use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will supply label use guidance as part of the licensed certification provider's tools.
Maintain registry of inspectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The registry must include inspector training records.
Provide quarterly report to EPA regarding certified new homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The WaterSense labeled new home notification form can be found on the WaterSense website.

Role/Responsibility	Additional Information or Resources
Oversee inspectors	➤ Licensed certification provider must follow its own policies and procedures for inspector oversight, which include the minimum functions specified by EPA.
Disclose conflicts of interest, as appropriate, to builder partner and/or homeowner	➤ Licensed certification provider will ensure disclosures are adequately addressed by its own internal quality control procedures.
Handle complaints that may arise	➤ Licensed certification provider will follow its own internal complaint resolution policies and procedures.
Submit to EPA oversight of WaterSense labeled homes	➤ EPA will coordinate in-home inspection oversight with the inspector, licensed certification provider, and builder partner.
Update inspectors on relevant WaterSense program changes	➤ Program administrator will communicate any program changes to licensed certification providers.

Table 3. Summary of Inspector Roles and Responsibilities

Role/Responsibility	Additional Information or Resources
Work for or contract with a licensed certification provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA maintains list of licensed certification providers on WaterSense website.
Attend training conducted by a licensed certification provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Licensed certification provider will supply inspection materials and guidance.
Disclose to licensed certification provider existing or potential conflicts of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Licensed certification provider will coordinate disclosure to builder partner and/or homeowner.
Coordinate inspection assignments with licensed certification provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Builder partner will contact licensed certification provider to initiate inspection process. ➤ Licensed certification provider can provide builder partner with a list of inspectors or assign an inspector to each project.
Schedule inspection and provide builder partner with copies of inspection materials	
Evaluate new home's conformance with specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Licensed certification provider will supply inspection materials to inspectors. ➤ If irrigation system is installed, the inspector shall verify it was audited by a WaterSense irrigation partner. ➤ EPA will maintain a list of irrigation partners on WaterSense website.
Work with builder partner to correct any nonconformities identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The inspector will note on inspection checklist any nonconformities and corrective actions taken.
Supply licensed certification provider with a copy of completed checklists and supporting documentation for each inspected home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Licensed certification provider will evaluate documentation and make certification decision.
Sign the WaterSense labeled new home certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The inspector signs the certificate after licensed certification provider has certified the new home. ➤ Licensed certification provider will issue certificate to builder partner.
Submit to licensed certification provider's inspection oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Licensed certification provider will follow its own oversight process.
Maintain file of inspected homes and submit to an annual file review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Licensed certification provider's quality assurance designee will review at least 10 percent of the inspection files.
Maintain status as specified by licensed certification provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This could include training or other requirements.
Submit to EPA oversight of WaterSense labeled new homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will coordinate in-home inspection oversight with the inspector, licensed certification provider, and builder partner.

Table 4. Summary of Builder Partner Roles and Responsibilities

Role/Responsibility	Additional Information or Resources
Sign a partnership agreement with EPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will post builder partnership agreement on WaterSense website. ➤ EPA will provide builder partners with a builder partner tool kit and access to the partner website.
Provide EPA with information for builder partner registry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will obtain initial partner registry information from builder’s partnership agreement. ➤ EPA will update builder partner registry quarterly based on information from licensed certification providers.
Contact a licensed certification provider to schedule an inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will maintain a list of licensed certification providers on WaterSense website. ➤ Builder partner will designate each home to be certified.
Work with inspector to inspect designated home(s) and address any issues of nonconformance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The inspector will supply builder partners with a copy of the inspection materials. ➤ Nonconformities and corrective actions will be noted on inspection documentation.
Properly advertise WaterSense labeled new home(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Licensed certification provider will supply builder partners with guidance on proper label use. ➤ EPA will provide guidance on advertisement of WaterSense labeled new homes in the builder partner tools.
Submit to licensed certification provider’s ongoing surveillance including new home re-inspection/co-inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If nonconformities are identified, licensed certification provider will provide an opportunity for simple corrective action.
Submit to EPA oversight of WaterSense labeled new homes, label use, and advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EPA will coordinate in-home inspection oversight with the inspector, licensed certification provider, and builder partner. ➤ If nonconformities are identified, EPA will provide an opportunity for simple corrective action.