



The WaterSense® *Blueprint*

Issue III, Fall 2014:

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IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the third issue of the WaterSense Blueprint, which brings you the latest information and updates on the **WaterSense New Homes program**.

Did you know that bathrooms are the biggest water users in your home, accounting for more than half of all indoor water use? In this issue, we focus on high-performing, water-efficient WaterSense labeled fixtures—such as toilets, showerheads, and bathroom sink faucets—that help WaterSense labeled new homes do more with less. Our “Marketing Corner” provides tips on the most effective ways to sell the water-efficient features in a home—starting with learning to let go of the term “low-flow”! We also developed a new infographic that illustrates how WaterSense labeled fixtures perform well while still providing water savings. Builder zHome shares insight on how installing WaterSense labeled fixtures translates into customer satisfaction. Finally, in October, WaterSense will promote Shower Better Month in conjunction with Energy Action Month. In addition to our usual sample social media posts, we share some tips on how you can encourage customers to “shower better” with WaterSense labeled showerheads.

As a reminder, we want the Blueprint to cover the topics you’re most interested in, so don’t hesitate to let us know what future topics you’d like us to address. Email those and other comments to watersense@epa.gov.

MARKETING CORNER: LET GO OF THE “LOW-FLOW” LINGO AND SELL SATISFACTION!

There are a lot of aspects of the 1990s that we’ve (thankfully) put behind us: fanny packs, dial-up Internet, grunge fashion, and pagers, to name a few. But there’s another cringe-worthy holdover from that decade folks still can’t seem to shake: the term “low-flow” when referring to plumbing fixtures. You wouldn’t use 1990s home design trends and terminology as selling points, so why use a dated term to sell the modern water-saving benefits of your homes today?

The Lowdown on Low-Flow

When the first-generation of low-flow toilets first came on the scene in the 1990s, their problems were infamous. Some homeowners complained of plumbing problems like toilets that experienced frequent clogging, or needing several flushes to clear the bowl. Others were frustrated with dribbling, unsatisfyingly weak showerheads. While these products might have used less water, the performance just wasn’t there. That’s one of the reasons the WaterSense label was created—just because

you want to save water doesn't mean you have to sacrifice performance! Although manufacturers of toilets and other products that earn the WaterSense label have since resolved early problems, misconceptions still persist that can keep consumers from choosing water-efficient products that save both water and money. With new designs and technological advancements, today's high-efficiency WaterSense labeled fixtures use less water and perform as well as or better than standard models, leaving those older, less efficient models in the proverbial dust!

Selling Water Efficiency

Incorporating WaterSense labeled plumbing fixtures into a home you're building or remodeling is a benefit that will save your customers water, energy, and money. If you're taking the initiative to build a better home why cloud your home buyers' perspective by associating the high-efficiency products of today with the negative connotations of the low-flow products of days gone by? Instead, make sure your customers know that WaterSense labeled products and the homes that include them are water-efficient and high-performing. These keywords are more productive and present the water- and energy-saving benefits of your homes the right way.

WaterSense Works

Whether the home you're building earns the WaterSense label, or just the products in the bathroom do, make sure you don't undersell. WaterSense labeled products will deliver as good or better performance than plumbing products that use more water because they have been independently certified to meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) criteria for water efficiency and performance. WaterSense labeled new homes get more done with less water, so consumers can expect all the comforts of a luxurious bathroom in a typical new home and save water.

In addition to WaterSense's independent product certification, any models used in WaterSense labeled new homes are examined after installation as part of the inspection process necessary for the home to earn the WaterSense label. Trained inspectors verify the flow rates of all toilets, urinals, bathroom faucets, and showerheads and check for things like leaks, missing aerators, or incorrect water pressure before a home can earn the WaterSense label.

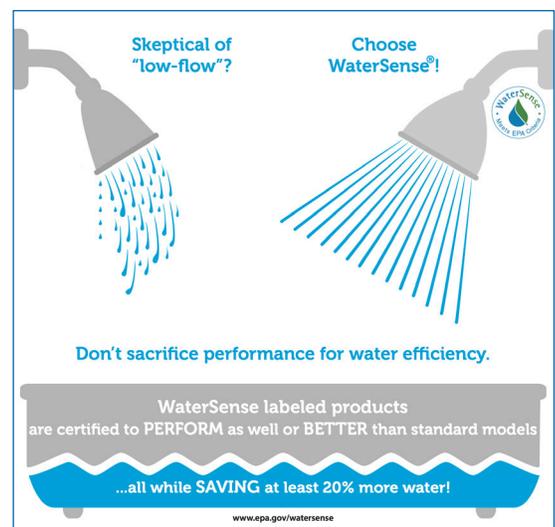
WaterSense labeled products and the homes that use them combine efficiency and performance you and your home buyers can be confident in. Don't let your marketing team, sales staff, or realtors sell your homes short. It's time to let go of the 1990s "low-flow" lingo and focus on the high-efficiency, high-performing aspects of WaterSense labeled products!

Now, if we could just get wedding deejays to stop playing the "Macarena."

NEW! INFOGRAPHIC ON HIGH-PERFORMING WATERSENSE LABELED PRODUCTS

All of the plumbing fixtures in WaterSense labeled new homes are also WaterSense labeled, which means they're independently certified for both water efficiency and performance. Use **this infographic** on websites and via social media to illustrate to your customers the confidence they can have in your high-performing, high-efficiency bathrooms.

Note that this infographic is on the password-protected WaterSense partners' website. If you need the username and password, please **email** the WaterSense Helpline. Not a partner? Joining is easy—**fill out a partnership agreement and become a partner** to get this and many other great tools.



BUILDER'S BEAT: PRODUCT PERFORMANCE IN ICHIJO USA'S ZHOME COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

In January 2012, builder Ichijo USA earned the WaterSense label for every home within its **zHome** community in Issaquah, Washington—a WaterSense first. zHome was also the first net-zero-energy, carbon-neutral townhome community in the United States, and received the Forest Stewardship Council's 2011 award for the best residential project in North America. zHome went above and beyond the **WaterSense new home specification** by not only including the required WaterSense labeled products and water-efficient design, but also installing a rainwater catchment system and other water-saving features. Together, these features allowed the homes to achieve a projected 70 percent net reduction in potable water use compared to a typical King County, Washington, home. WaterSense caught up with Nick Nied, the Ichijo USA project manager for zHome, for an update on this pioneering community of completely WaterSense labeled homes.

Product Performance Continues to Satisfy

The proven efficiency and performance of WaterSense labeled products power much of the savings and satisfaction of WaterSense labeled homes. When asked about homeowner feedback on the plumbing fixtures in the zHome project—all of which are WaterSense labeled models—Nied had an encouraging response: “We have not had any negative feedback.” He continued, “Homeowner feedback on the water systems at zHome has been very positive. At first, there was hesitation about the low-flow fixtures and fears of waiting long periods of time for hot water or not getting wet enough during a shower. However, due to route preplanning and fixture selection, no fears have been realized, and all homeowners have been very impressed with all facets of the water system.” More than two years of satisfying product performance in this first community of all WaterSense labeled homes shows the continued value of WaterSense labeled models, making them a real selling point.

Partnership Drives Success

The zHome community is not only a stellar example of water-efficient building practices but also represents the true spirit of strategic collaboration between WaterSense partners, bringing together Ichijo USA, Cascade Water Alliance, and the City of Issaquah. Nied had high praise for the Cascade Water Alliance (**2010 WaterSense Promotional Partner of the Year**) and indicated the organization was instrumental in making the project happen. “While we strive to build energy-efficient homes as a standard, Mike Brent with Cascade Water Alliance was the true driver of enabling zHome to become WaterSense labeled,” said Nied. “With his expertise and advice, we were able to critique current designs, practices, and selections in order to improve construction and quality of water use.”

Brent, water resources manager at Cascade Water Alliance, learned about the water efficiency aspects of the zHome project and approached the City of Issaquah and Ichijo USA about the WaterSense label. “zHome was such a remarkable project, we wanted to make sure it received WaterSense certification to recognize the tremendous water savings the homes will achieve,” said Brent. Ichijo USA and Cascade Water Alliance are currently pulling together data to determine the real water-savings achieved through zHome.

The joint venture and continued cooperation demonstrate how promotional partners and builder partners coming together can create sustainable, water-saving, and successful communities.

WaterSense Labeled Products in the Larger Community

Cascade Water Alliance is no stranger to the benefits of WaterSense labeled products. For the zHome community, Cascade provided WaterSense labeled toilets, showerheads, and bathroom faucets, as well as innovative, real-time use monitors for every unit to ensure maximum efficiency. Moreover, Cascade's highly successful rebate program for WaterSense labeled toilets helped make WaterSense a permanent fixture in more than 2,000 King County households. In a survey of nearly 900 of Cascade's rebate customers, 94 percent said that their new WaterSense labeled toilets perform as well as or better than their previous models. The continued product satisfaction at zHome, as well as in the surrounding region, helps affirm EPA's performance criteria for WaterSense labeled plumbing fixtures.

SHARE THE SAVINGS: PROMOTE THAT PERFORMANCE!

Combine our new infographic with these sample social media posts to highlight the certified performance and efficiency of the WaterSense labeled products in your homes.

Twitter

- Every plumbing product in our #WaterSenseNewHome is @EPAwatersense labeled—independently certified for water efficiency AND performance.
- Save H2O w/o sacrifice! The bathrooms in our #WaterSenseNewHomes feature high-performing, high-efficiency WaterSense labeled products.
- Skeptical of "low-flow" products? Our homes have @EPAwatersense labeled products, certified to use less H2O w/o sacrificing performance.
- Our #WaterSenseNewHomes use WaterSense labeled products that DO more and USE less. Get certified performance you can count on.

Facebook

Feeling a little ho-hum about your bathroom lately? Maybe getting great performance *and* saving water and money will help! Our homes use high-efficiency, high-performing WaterSense labeled products that get more done with less water and energy. Save on utility bills while enjoying a luxurious, modern bathroom. And because WaterSense labeled products have been independently certified to meet EPA's criteria for water efficiency and performance you can rest assured that they will perform as well or better than standard models.

Learn more at www.epa.gov/watersense/new_homes/ and contact us at [insert your company/contact information] to get performance and savings you can see and feel.

Encourage Your Customers to Shower Better

Do you install **WaterSense labeled showerheads** in the homes you build? This October, WaterSense will be working with its program partners and other stakeholders across the country to promote **Shower Better Month** in conjunction with Energy Action Month. A WaterSense labeled showerhead can reduce the average family's annual water use by 2,900 gallons, save more than \$70 per year in energy and water costs, and conserve the amount of energy needed to power a home for 13 days every year! Because WaterSense labeled showerheads are independently certified to meet EPA's water efficiency *and* performance criteria, any concerns with customer satisfaction are easily washed away.

Highlight the water and energy savings your homes can offer during Shower Better Month and throughout the year with WaterSense's **Shower Better outreach tools**, including:

- **"Drops to Watts" Brochure:** Distribute this **brochure** at model homes or sales centers to communicate the water-energy savings nexus of WaterSense labeled showerheads and other water-efficient products.
- **Savings Infographic:** Use this **graphic** to show your customers the savings they can realize from buying a home equipped with WaterSense labeled showerheads.
- **Customizable Showerhead Information Card:** Attach this **customizable card** to WaterSense labeled showerheads in your homes, or display it in a brochure holder to encourage consumer awareness.
- **Sample Social Media Posts:** Encourage your social media network to "shower better" using these **sample posts, hashtags, and shortened URLs**.
- **Shower Better Messaging and Facts:** Educate your sales team and customers on showering better with **sample messaging and savings statistics**. These could be great starters for a blog post on your company's website.



Note that these tools are on the password-protected WaterSense partners' website. If you need the username and password, please **email** the WaterSense Helpline. Not a partner? Joining is easy—**fill out a partnership agreement and become a partner**.

We hope you'll shower your customers with water-energy savings knowledge!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 18, 2014: "Energy—and Water—Efficiency in the DOE Zero Energy Ready Home Program" Webinar

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Zero Energy Ready Home (ZERH) Program webinar series will feature EPA WaterSense's Jonah Schein, who will discuss technologies and techniques to build high-performing, water-efficient homes. The session will cover an introduction to WaterSense and the basics of efficient hot water distribution in a home—required for ZERH models. Getting the hot water distribution system right is key to getting a home to "zero ready." It saves thousands of gallons of water per year and, as an added bonus, homeowners love getting hot water when they want it! **Register** to receive call-in information.

September 17-18 and October 15, 2014: Water Efficiency Workshop for Colorado Plumbers

Are you building homes in Colorado? Help make sure your plumber is up to speed on the latest in water-efficient plumbing techniques and topics. Network and learn more about gray water, efficient hot water distribution systems, plumbing requirements for green home labels and certifications (e.g., WaterSense, ENERGY STAR®, LEED®), as well as Colorado's new WaterSense legislation. **Workshops** will be held in Denver on September 17, Colorado Springs on September 18, and Fort Collins on October 15. This event is sponsored by WaterSense partners Western Resources Advocates, Colorado Springs Utilities, Denver Water, Fort Collins Utilities, the Colorado chapter of Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors (PHCC), and many more. **Register** to receive call-in information.

October 2014: Shower Better Month

October is Energy Action Month, which promotes simple ways to reduce the amount of energy we consume in our everyday lives. Throughout October, WaterSense will focus on its Shower Better campaign and encourage homeowners to take one simple action: replace an old showerhead with a WaterSense labeled model. Americans can shower better with WaterSense labeled showerheads' strong performance and water, energy, and cost savings. Visit the **WaterSense partner website** to learn more.

October 8-10, 2014: WaterSmart Innovations (WSI) Conference and Exposition

The seventh annual WSI Conference and Exposition will be held on October 8 to 10, 2014, at the South Point Hotel and Conference Center in Las Vegas. In addition to making presentations on WaterSense labeled new homes and other program activities, we are exhibiting at booth #113. WaterSense will also announce the 2014 WaterSense Partners of the Year at a luncheon co-sponsored by the Alliance for Water Efficiency on Thursday, October 9, 2014. This event is a great opportunity to recognize and network with other WaterSense partners and water efficiency professionals. Visit the **WSI website** to register and learn more.

NEW! Version 1.2 of the WaterSense New Home Specification

WaterSense recently released Version 1.2 of the *WaterSense New Home Specification*, which expands the pool of eligible irrigation design, installation, and auditing professionals available to builders seeking the WaterSense label. WaterSense also took the opportunity to make minor editorial changes to the specification and to remove outdated information regarding the requirements for selecting irrigation controllers.

Learn more about Version 1.2, which became effective on July 24, 2014.

Did you miss the **July 22 partner marketing webinar** on Shower Better and 2013 WaterSense accomplishments? Not to worry! You can **view the presentation and listen to the recording on the partner website**.

October 24, 2014: Q3 2014 WaterSense Quarterly Reporting Deadline

Make sure your licensed certification providers report to WaterSense on any of your homes that earned the WaterSense label during the third quarter of 2014. The Q3 2014 reporting deadline is Friday, October 24, 2014. Visit the **WaterSense partner website** to learn more.

November 17-19, 2014: National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC) OpTech Conference & Exposition (Multifamily Operations and Technology)

The 2014 NMHC OpTech Conference & Exposition, held in Orlando, Florida, November 17-19, 2014, brings together industry and decision-making experts in the multi-family sector. EPA WaterSense's Jonah Schein will be speaking in conjunction with colleagues from EPA's ENERGY STAR program about future projects the two programs hope to take on together as ENERGY STAR gears up to begin benchmarking energy use in multi-family buildings. Visit the **NMHC website** to register and learn more.