OUTDOOR FEATURES

Rain Sensors

Optional Water Efficiency Measure: May contribute to the 30 percent water efficiency requirement, depending on the chosen WaterSense® Approved Certification Method (WACM).

UNDERSTAND

- Rain sensors, or rainfall shutoff devices, are products designed to interrupt a scheduled irrigation event when a certain amount of rain has fallen. They prevent an automatic sprinkler system from turning on until the water has evaporated from the sensor, or for a predetermined amount of time, depending on the technology.
- Rain sensors operate by measuring rainwater by weight or electrical conductivity or measuring the proportional expansion of water-sensitive materials like cork disks.
- Some states, such as Florida, Georgia, and New Jersey, require these devices by law.

BUILD

- **MOUNT** the rain sensor in an open area where it is exposed to rainfall, such as on top of a fence or on the eaves of an existing structure, not impeded by overhangs, foliage, gutters, or other obstructions.
- **INSTALL** the rain sensor outside all irrigation zones, as water from the sprinklers could trigger the sensor.
- **WORK** with an irrigation professional who can help ensure that a rain sensor is included within the irrigation system design and installed properly.
- **REFERENCE** the WaterSense Labeled Controllers web page at www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-labeled-controllers for information on WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers to pair with the rain sensor. All labeled controllers are required to be able to wirelessly connect to the rain sensor.

Handoff Tips for the Homeowner

Maintenance is essential for a rain sensor to function properly. This may include replacing batteries at specified intervals, removing debris from the rain sensor, and ensuring that the connection (wired or wireless) is working correctly. Builders should communicate the manufacturer's recommended maintenance procedures.

Learn More

Learn more about reducing outdoor water use at WaterSense's Watering Tips web page at www.epa.gov/watersense/watering-tips.

VERIFY

- **CONFIRM** that a rain sensor is installed in an open area with access to open sky and rain, and that the device is properly connected to the irrigation controller.
- **TEST** the device by using a hose to spray at the rain sensor while one of the nearby irrigation zones is running to confirm that the sensor will interrupt irrigation. Some controllers require a particular mode to properly test the sensor. Check the controller model user manual for details. If the sensor doesn't shut the irrigation system off after a few minutes, let the builder or system installer know to fix the problem.

**NOTE: Consult with the Home Certification Organization for specific verification protocols.*

This technical fact sheet is part of EPA's *Technical Reference Manual for WaterSense Labeled Homes*. For the full document and other tools and resources for homes, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/tools-and-resources.

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