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WaterSense is a partnership program sponsored by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Products that have met the WaterSense specification bear the logo below, on either their packaging or on the product itself.

The program promotes water efficiency and enhances the market for water-efficient products, programs, and practices.

Water efficiency means improved technologies and practices that use less water while delivering equal or better service.



GREEN PRODUCTS: About the WaterSense® Program and Labeled Products

Given the rapid escalation of green product claims in virtually every product category, the selection of environmentally improved building products and materials can be a confusing task for builders.

Independent, third-party certification of performance remains the “gold standard” as well as the builder’s best assurance that a green claim has substance, and that the use of a specific product will not increase liability or warranty risks.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a leader in the area of third-party green performance standards. The EPA’s WaterSense initiative builds on the success of its ENERGY STAR® initiative, and represents a rigorous, credible and independent green product labeling process.

WaterSense¹ is a voluntary program for the labeling of water-efficient products. Similar in structure to the ENERGY STAR labeling initiative for energy-efficient appliances and equipment, it provides an additional level of recognition for top-performing products. Unlike ENERGY STAR, which is operated in Canada by Natural Resources Canada, WaterSense is not currently promoted by the Canadian government. However, given that there is a North American market for plumbing fixtures, most WaterSense-labeled products are available in Canada.

It is important to note that all products bearing the WaterSense label meet applicable CSA/ASME certification requirements – WaterSense specifications are over and above these minimum certification requirements.

For new home builders and renovators looking for water-efficient fixtures that save water while providing equal or superior performance, WaterSense labeled products can offer specific advantages.

WaterSense Specifications

The EPA currently has WaterSense specifications in place for bathroom sink faucets and high-efficiency toilets. A WaterSense specification for showerheads is under development. Other WaterSense draft and final specifications that are less relevant to Canadian builders include landscape irrigation certification programs, urinals, and water-efficient single-family new homes.

Current WaterSense specifications that are widely applicable to Canadian residential construction are as follows:

- **For faucets**, the WaterSense specification sets the maximum flow rate at 5.7 litres/1.5 US gallons per minute tested at a flowing pressure of 60 pounds per square inch, compared to the industry standard of 8.3 litres/2.2 US gallons per minute.

¹ The WaterSense and ENERGY STAR name and logos are registered trademarks of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

- **For toilets**, the WaterSense program sets the maximum water use level at 4.8 litres/1.28 US gallons per flush for single-flush and 6.1 - 4.2 litres/ 1.6 - 1.1 US gallons per flush for dual-flush toilets, compared to the industry standard of 6.1 litres/1.6 US gallons per flush. In addition, all WaterSense labeled toilets must pass the MaP test (Maximum Performance Testing), a more rigorous testing process than required for CSA/ASME certification. MaP testing provides greater assurance of acceptable clearance of solid wastes.

Advantages of Specifying WaterSense Labeled Products

In light of the industry's past experience with performance issues when low-flush toilets were first introduced, WaterSense labeling offers specific advantages. The MaP testing protocol required by WaterSense is considerably more demanding in terms of solid waste clearance than the testing required currently for conventional product certification. This provides additional assurance to builders that WaterSense labeled products will deliver customer satisfaction.

Availability and Cost of WaterSense Labeled Products in Canada

The CHBA has consulted with major brand-name manufacturers of both bathroom faucets and toilets to determine the current availability of WaterSense labeled products in Canada. The manufacturers have confirmed that the vast majority of WaterSense labeled products are available in our markets. Note that in some cases, product numbers may be different in Canada, but model names remain consistent.

WaterSense labeled bathroom faucets and high-efficiency toilets are available in a wide range of price points, designs and décor themes. The cost premium for WaterSense labeled products appears to be quite low.

How to Find WaterSense Labeled Products

If you are sourcing fixtures from a major brand-name manufacturer or their distributor/supplier network, the easiest step is to ask for a list of their WaterSense labeled products. Alternatively, you can download a complete listing of current certified products, organized by manufacturer, from the EPA at:

www.epa.gov/watersense/pp/lists.htm

Real Savings and Benefits for Your Customers

- WaterSense labeled toilets can save about 16 per cent of total indoor water use.
- WaterSense labeled faucets can reduce a household's annual water use by nearly 2,270 litres/ 600 U.S. gallons and 70 kilowatt-hours of electricity used for heating the water.
- Savings based on U.S. data.