# Water Efficiency Evaluation

## A Note to Homebuyers, Homeowners, and Inspectors

Water is vital to all of us. In an effort to ensure our homes in Las Cruces are as water-efficient as possible, the City's Utilities Water Conservation Program is working with area home inspectors to help homeowners and potential homebuyers understand more about their property. The attached Water Efficiency Checklist will provide you with additional information as you consider changes you may want to make.

You can use this checklist to help identify leaks, inefficient fixtures and appliances, as well as issues with landscaping and irrigation systems. If you are buying a home, you may want to follow up with a plumber, certified landscaper, or other local professionals. The RESOURCES listed will help you find water-efficient fixtures and appliances.

## A Note to Home Inspectors

As a home inspector, you can help the consumer gauge the water efficiency of the home they are buying by completing the attached checklist, in addition to your standard inspection process. Your evaluation is a value-added service that people will come to request.

**On the checklist, at the bottom of each column there is space to make recommendations for improving the water efficiency of the home.**

When discussing your findings with the homeowner or buyer, help them understand that:

- *The three biggest indoor water uses are toilets, washing machines, and showers.*
- *In the summer months, average residential water usage doubles due to outdoor landscaping irrigation, which accounts for 33% of total residential water use.*
- *On average, leaks account for about 12% of residential indoor water use.*
- *Most appliance manufacturers offer water-efficient models of appliances for approximately the same cost as those that are not water-efficient. For example, a 1.28 gallons per flush (gpf), dual flush toilet is available for $150 or less and many low-flow showerheads cost less than $20.*

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## RESOURCES

**To learn more about residential water conservation visit:**

**www.las-cruces.org/WaterConservation**

**www.ose.state.nm.us/WUC/index.php**

**www.wateruseitwisely.com**
(intended for Arizona, but also useful)

**www.epa.gov/watersense**

**www.energystar.gov**

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water conservation program

***To receive a free low-flow showerhead for your home, call (575) 528-3549.***

# Water Efficiency CHECKLIST

| Indoor Water Efficiency Evaluation Criteria | | Not Present | Water Efficient | Water Savings Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Leaks** | Look for meter creep (ex: red triangle spinning on meter) | | | |
| **Visible leaks** | Hot water heater or alternative | | | |
| | Toilets | | | |
| | Bathroom faucets | | | |
| | Kitchen faucets | | | |
| | Showerheads | | | |
| | Water softener | | | |
| | Other fixtures and appliances | | | |
| **Service pressure** | Pressure test between 40 psi and 60 psi | | | |
| | Pressure tank installed and set to 60 psi | | | |
| | PRV installed upstream of fixtures and pressure test ≤ 60 psi | | | |
| **Hot water delivery** | Hot water heater tank | | | |
| | Tankless hot water heater | | | |
| | Solar thermal water heating system | | | |
| | Manifold plumbing distribution system (ex: Maniblock) | | | |
| | Other (please specify) | | | |
| **Toilets** | Standard flush (low- flow std 1.28 gpf; 1.6 gpf acceptable) | | | |
| | Dual flush (low- flow std 1.28 gpf; 1.6 gpf acceptable) | | | |
| | WaterSense labeled | | | |
| **Bathroom sink faucets** | WaterSense labeled (low- flow 1.0 gpm to 1.5 gpm) | | | |
| **Kitchen sink faucets** | WaterSense labeled (low- flow 1.5 gpm to 2.0 gpm) | | | |
| **Showerheads** | WaterSense labeled | | | |
| | Measured flow rate (low- flow std 1.5 gpm to 2.0 gpm) | | | |
| **Dishwashers** | EnergyStar qualifed (also specifes water efficiency level)<br>It is recommended that home buyer look up the model #<br>on the www.EnergyStar.gov | | | |
| **Clothes washers** | EnergyStar qualifed (also specifes water efficiency level).<br>It is recommended that home buyer look up the model #<br>on the www.EnergyStar.gov | | | |
| | Water factor≤6.0 | | | |
| **Evaporative cooling** | MasterCool (single inlet type) | | | |
| | Other evaporative cooler | | | |
| | Continuous water bleed present (not water efficient) | | | |
| **Drinking water treatment systems** | Verify efficiency rating (these can produce a lot of water waste) | | | |

**Results and Recommendations:**

| Outdoor Water Efficiency Evaluation Criteria | | Not Present | Water Efficient | Water Savings Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape design** | Circle the applicable category of landscaping in each area of home. | | | |
| ***Front yard*** | Traditional (at least 50% turf grass) - not water efficient | | | |
| | Lush-scape (variety of low- to high-water plants, turf <30%) | | | |
| | Xeriscape (primarily low-water plants with groundcover on 50%+, and organic or rock mulches) - most water-efficient option | | | |
| | Zero-scape (90% rocks or exposed soil, plants covering less than 10%) - not recommended | | | |
| ***Side yards*** | Traditional (at least 50% turf grass) - not water efficient | | | |
| | Lush-scape (variety of low- to high-water plants, turf <30%) | | | |
| | Xeriscape (primarily low-water plants with groundcover on 50%+, and organic or rock mulches) - most water efficient option | | | |
| | Zero-scape (90% rocks or exposed soil, plants covering less than 10%) - not recommended | | | |
| ***Back yard*** | Traditional (at least 50% turf grass) - not water efficient | | | |
| | Lush-scape (variety of low- to high-water plants, turf <30%) | | | |
| | Xeriscape (primarily low-water plants with groundcover on 50%+, and organic or rock mulches) - most water efficient option | | | |
| | Zero-scape (90% rocks or exposed soil, plants covering less than 10%) - not recommended | | | |
| **Slopes > 4:1** | Irrigated turf or groundcover - prone to runoff when adjacent to hard surfaces | | | |
| | Low and medium water plants on drip system | | | |
| | Mulch only | | | |
| **Mulching** | Organic or rock mulch (2"-3" deep recommended) | | | |
| | Exposed soil (prone to erosion and runoff ) | | | |
| **Pools/spas** | Cover installed | | | |
| | Independently metered | | | |
| | Gutter or grate system to catch oversplash | | | |
| **Ornamental water (fountains, pools)** | Recirculates water | | | |
| **Irrigation system** | Designed and installed by WaterSense, Irrigation Assoc., QWEL, or LIAM certified landscaper | | | |
| | If multi-family dwelling, independently metered landscape | | | |
| | Audit by WaterSense, Irrigation Assoc., QWEL, or LIAM certified landscaper | | | |
| **Benefits of an irrigation audit** | An irrigation audit can identify problems and optimization needed to reduce water use. An auditor will identify<br>1) water distribution uniformity, 2) if emitters, rotors, and/or spray heads are functioning properly, 3) if there are leaks,<br>4) a customized seasonally appropriate irrigation schedule | | | |
| **System type** | Spray or rotors (indicate approx sq ft) - usually appropriate for turf only | | | |
| | Drip (indicate approx sq ft) | | | |
| | Sub-surface drip (indicate approx sq ft) (works for turf or xeriscape) | | | |
| **Controllers** | Programmable (can set days of week, multiple watering cycles, length of time) | | | |
| | Smart-controller | | | |
| | Hose timer (good option if using hose and sprinkler) | | | |

**Results and Recommendations:**

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