



County of Santa Cruz Environmental Health
701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 312, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073
Main: (831) 454-2022 Direct: (831) 454-3133

Water Conservation Certificate Frequently Asked Questions

Who needs to fill out a Water Conservation Certificate?

Any property owner selling a house in the County jurisdiction must submit a Certificate at time of sale. If BOTH the seller and the buyer consent, the responsibility can be transferred to the buyer through a Transfer of Responsibility to Retrofit form. The buyer has 90 days to make any upgrades and submit a Certificate.

How can I tell if I am in the County jurisdiction or another water district?

In Santa Cruz County, there are two water conservation certification programs:

- City of Santa Cruz Water Department
<http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/departments/water/conservation/regulations/plumbing-fixture-retrofit-regulations>
- City of Watsonville
<https://www.cityofwatsonville.org/1474/Water-Efficient-Plumbing>

Properties that have water connections with either of those two water districts should contact their Water District for water certification requirements. Properties in unincorporated areas, that are not part of those two water districts, need to meet the requirements of the County Ordinance. This is true even if the property has a private well.

Do I need to schedule an inspection?

Properties must be inspected by a licensed real estate agent, a licensed plumber or general contractor, or a licensed home inspector. That person must sign the Certificate verifying the inspection. At the moment, Santa Cruz County Environmental Health staff do not do inspections. Properties outside the County jurisdiction may require an inspection by the local water district.

What if my house already has efficient fixtures?

Existing toilets that use 1.6 gallons per flush or less and showers that use 2.0 gallons per minute or less do not need to be retrofitted. When this is the case, the toilets and showerheads should be listed as “exempt” on the Certificate.

How can I tell how many gallons the toilet uses?

Most low flow and high efficiency toilets are easily identified by the blue or black ink stamp indicating the flush rate. The stamp is usually located behind the toilet seat, between the tank and the bowl, however it can also be in the tank. If you cannot find your toilet's water use stamp, determine its age. Federal plumbing standards starting in 1994 required that toilets use no more than 1.6 GPF. If it was installed before 1994 and there is no visible stamp, the toilet needs to be replaced.

The shower head is not marked with a flow rate. How can I determine that it uses 2.0 gal or less per minute?

Most compliant shower heads are marked with 2.0 gal per minute or less on the face or on the body next to the threads. If the shower head is not marked, and the original packaging isn't available, it is out of compliance and must be replaced with a 2.0 gal per minute or less fixture.

Will I receive a copy of the certification after the County receives it?

No. You should keep a copy for your records. The county will retain all Certificates records on file.

Does Scotts Valley have a water conservation certification program?

At this time, the incorporated area of the city of Scotts Valley does not have a water conservation retrofit requirement and does not fall under the county jurisdiction. In the City of Scotts Valley, retrofit is recommended but not required. However if you are located outside the city limits and are served by the Scotts Valley Water District you must comply with the County's retrofit requirements.

Who do I contact?

For the County Water Conservation Program:

[Santa Cruz County Environmental Health](#)

(831) 454-3133

If you are a customer of the City of Santa Cruz:

[City of Santa Cruz Water Conservation Department](#)

(831) 420-5230

If you are a customer of the City of Watsonville:

[City of Watsonville Water Conservation Program](#)

(831) 768-3155

Where do I send my Certificate?

Santa Cruz County Environmental Health

Water Conservation Program

701 Ocean St Rm. 312

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Or e-mail signed forms to Env.Hlth@SantaCruzCounty.us