



Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Abingdon, Virginia



Virginia Green is the Commonwealth of Virginia’s campaign to promote environmentally-friendly practices in all aspects of Virginia’s tourism industry. **Virginia Green** has established “core activities” specific to each sector of tourism, and these practices are considered the required minimum for participation in the program. However, **Virginia Green** encourages its participants to reduce their environmental impacts in all aspects of their operations; and this profile provides a full list of all their “green” activities. These are the activities that guests / customers can expect to find when they visit this facility.

Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center

“We operate a combined education and conference facility. Ten colleges and universities hold classes here.”

Green Statement: “As an educational institution, we feel it is our responsibility to be a leader in environmental education of both students and the public.”



CORE ACTIVITIES for Conference Centers

“☑” This symbol indicates a required activity for Virginia Green Conference Centers. Participants self-certify that these activities are in place and they provide additional specifics on other activities. Visitors to the **Education Center** can expect the following practices:

☑ **Recycling and Waste Reduction.** All conference centers must provide for recycling at their events. Aluminum can and plastic bottle recycling are a must. Recycling of steel cans, cardboard, office paper, and composting of waste foods are encouraged as well. This facility pledges that they:

- Recycle: aluminum cans, plastic, office paper, toner cartridges, newspaper, cardboard, fluorescent lamps, batteries, electronic equipment
- Numerous recycling bins are available for use throughout the facility
- Track overall waste bills
kitchen (or meetings/events)
- Donate excess food from events
dining room (or meetings/events)
- Use reusable dishware and glassware & minimize use of disposables
- Use water pitches and filtered water to minimize the use of single-use bottles
restrooms
- Use bulk soap dispensers in public restrooms
- Purchase recycled-content paper-towels and toilet paper
building and grounds
- Using “green” Cleaners (www.greenseal.org) that are dispensed in bulk
- Purchase durable equipment and furniture

- Purchase low-VOC carpets and fabrics
- Use latex paints
- Properly recycle and/or disposal of thinners and solvents (required by EPA-RCRA)
- Perform preventative maintenance on all appliances, HVAC systems, plumbing, and vehicles
- Use less toxic materials
- Use a nutrient management plan that minimizes the use of fertilizers in landscaping

Styrofoam elimination and reduction of disposables. Virginia Green Conference centers are encouraged to eliminate or minimize the use of Styrofoam-based products and to use alternative disposables that are made of natural products and/or are bio-degradable. This facility pledges that they:

- Catering guidelines ban the use of Styrofoam products

Water Conservation. The facility must have a plan for conserving water that should consider plumbing modifications and landscaping. This facility pledges that they:

- Track overall water usage and wastewater
- Have a numeric goal to reduce water consumption over time
- Perform preventative maintenance to stop drips and leaks
- Use water-flow metering to discover leaks and areas of high use
- Have:
 - low flow restrictors on faucets and showerheads
 - low flow toilets
 - waterless urinals
- Discourage water-based cleanup (sweeping first)
- Have an effective landscape management plan which utilize drought tolerant species, and minimizes lawn areas
- Have an effective stormwater management plan

Energy Conservation. The facility must have a plan in place that encourages replacement of lighting and equipment to energy-efficient alternatives. This facility pledges that they:

- Track overall energy bills
- Have had an energy audit to identify efficiency opportunities
- Have a numeric goal of how much they want to reduce their energy usage over time
- Have an “energy management system” in place to track and meter energy usage
- Use:
 - compact fluorescent light bulbs in all rooms and in canned lighting
 - LED Exit Signs
 - high efficiency fluorescent ballasts and lamps (T5s and T8s)
- Have high efficiency heating & air conditioning (HVAC) systems
- Perform preventative maintenance on HVAC system
- Have individual thermostats for each room/area
- Have installed additional insulation
- Use natural lighting
- Use lighting sensors to turn on/off lights
- Use occupancy sensors to turn on/off lights
- Purchase EnergyStar-rated computers, copiers, and appliances
- Have thermal-rated windows and insulation
- Used LEED criteria when developing new buildings
- Are working to achieve LEED-EB (existing building) certification through operational changes and renovations

Green Events Package. Virginia Green conference centers must offer a “green” or “environmentally-friendly” package for conferences, meetings and other events. Even if the facility only offers occasional, small events, at least recycling will be provided. This facility pledges that they:

- Promote the availability of “green meetings/conferences” in marketing packages
- Provide pitchers of water instead of bottles
- Promote the use of biodegradable products

For more information on **Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center**, see www.swcenter.edu or contact **Joyce Brooks** at jbrooks@swcenter.edu or 276-619-4349.

For more information on the *Virginia Green* program, see www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/viriniagreen/homepage.html or go to www.viriniagreentravel.org.



Virginia Green is the Commonwealth's campaign to encourage environmentally-friendly practices in all aspects of Virginia's tourism industry. *Virginia Green* is supported through a partnership between the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association, and the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

