



## *Pollution Prevention Strategies for the Hospitality Industry*

### **The Core Activities**

There are dozens of well-established techniques and activities that will help to minimize your facility's environmental impacts (see "the checklist"); and there are many opportunities that will be unique to your facility. We encourage Green Lodging facilities to be as "environmentally-friendly" as possible and to tell their guests about your activities.

When your guests choose to come to a "green lodging" facility, they expect to "see" that your facility is committed to minimizing its environmental impact. That is why we have established the following Core Activities that guests can expect at all **Green Lodging** facilities. This list is meant to be a straight-forward list of minimum expectations, but we understand that situations vary greatly due to local conditions and availability; and you may substitute another activity and still be in Green Lodging.

Below is a more thorough description of what is meant for each core activity.

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**Optional Linen Service.** This means that you have established a system that is communicated to the guests that sheets, towels, and other linen are not automatically changed every day during their stay. More and more, **optional linen service has become an accepted standard for environmentally-aware facilities**, and it gives you the opportunity to communicate your commitment via a placard or other message. This activity will greatly decrease usage of water and generation of wastewater, energy usage, and harmful detergents that are used to clean each day. This decrease in washing will also increase the life expectancy of your linen, thus saving money on new linen purchases. And it decreases the workload for your cleaning staff.

Although this cost-saving activity seems like a "no-brainer" for any facility, certain facilities may decide that this simply is not part of the "pampered guest" experience that they are trying to achieve. If this facility has made additional environmental commitments, they might still qualify as a Green Lodging facility.



**Recycling.** Facilities must provide the opportunity for guests to recycle during their stay. Environmentally-aware guests recycle at home. Therefore, it will bother them to no end if they have to throw away a soda can while on vacation! There are probably many things that you are doing that are helping to minimize your environmental impacts more than recycling does. However, **recycling is the most visible sign of your facility's commitment to the environment.**

In certain areas of the state, it is simply not practical to provide a comprehensive recycling program. However, your facility should have a written explanation available that explains "recycling opportunities" that they do provide and why they do not provide for other recycling. If you simply cannot sustain recycling because of the

costs or the impractical aspects of transport, you should at least inform guests where there might be a local recycling center. In addition, you should at least be trying to recycle cardboard from your food operations and supply areas; and this can be passed on to guests in your explanation of recycling issues as well.

**Water Conservation.** The facility must have a plan for minimizing water usage. By “plan”, it does not mean that you have to have a formal written plan. We do not need for you to submit a plan. It simply means that your management is aware of your facility’s water usage and the associated costs and is taking measures over time to lessen that usage.



### A Simple Water Conservation Plan

**Step 1: How Much Water Do You Use?** Just look at your water bills – both water usage and wastewater generation. This is how much waste water usage is costing you each year, and there are plenty of easy, cost-effective tweaks that can pay off in significant cost savings.

**Step 2: What are Your Opportunities?** There are opportunities wherever you use water.

- Water-Saving Faucets and showerheads use higher pressure, but use up to 40% less water!
- Low-Flow Toilets. Today’s low-flow toilets actually work and save up to 40%!
- Re-circulating Washing Machines and Dishwashers have great savings potential
- “Wet” Clean-up. Does your staff use the hose instead of the broom?!
- Heating and Air-Conditioning. Many systems use cooling water that is used just once and/or it is treated with chemicals. There are many other options that allow for recirculation!
- Landscaping. Do you have automated sprinklers that are equipped with rain gauges? Have you considered minimizing turf and using “drought-tolerant” plants?
- Leak Detection. Do you encourage your staff to report leaks? Do you inspect toilets?

**Step 3: Do You Have a Goal?** You know how much you use today. “Can we reduce our water usage by 10% this year? How are going to get there? How much money can we save?!”

Of course, the great thing about this activity is that the result of any of these measures is cost savings!

**Energy Conservation.** The facility must have a plan in place that encourages energy efficiency and conservation. Again, you do not have to have a formal plan, however, this activity would imply that the facility management is assessing opportunities to reduce energy consumption wherever possible. One very “guest-

visible” indicator of a commitment to reduce energy consumption is the use of compact fluorescents in guest rooms.



## A Simple Energy Conservation Plan

**Step 1: How Much Energy Do You Use?** Again, just look at your bills and see how much energy wasting is costing you! Now, let’s develop a policy to purchase energy-efficient equipment and to conserve energy where possible.

**Step 2: What are Your Opportunities?** There are opportunities wherever you use energy.

- Fluorescent lights use up to 90% less energy than conventional incandescent lights! Fluorescent last 7 times as long and reduces labor for changing. They also emit very little heat, which can save a great deal of cooling costs.
- LED Exit Signs. Replace exit signs with LED lighting – they never burn out and use 90% less energy.
- Energy Star. Whenever you buy computers, copiers, refrigerators, washers, dishwashers, vacuum-cleaners, air conditioners....you name it – any type of electrical equipment – look for the Energy-Star logo. This means that this device has been tested and rated to be in the top 1/3 of the brands in the market from an energy-efficiency standpoint.
- Automation. Lighting sensors and automated thermostats are easy to install and will pay for themselves in a matter of weeks!
- Heating and Air-Conditioning. How old is that system and when was it last maintained? Try to isolate your costs for heating and air-conditioning through metering or bill estimates and consider how much you could save with an energy-efficient system.

**Step 3: Do You Have a Goal?** Again, you know how much you use today. “Can we reduce our energy consumption by 10% this year? How are going to get there? How much money can we save?!” Also, you can easily translate these savings to environmental benefits by using an energy-emissions calculator such as [http://oaspub.epa.gov/powpro/ept\\_pack.emissions?p\\_zip=23222&p\\_egcid=19876](http://oaspub.epa.gov/powpro/ept_pack.emissions?p_zip=23222&p_egcid=19876). For instance, if your facility reduced consumption by 200 Kwh per month then your facility could claim reduced environmental emissions from power generation of 3000 pounds of Carbon Dioxide, 6.8 pounds of Nitrous Oxide, and 1.7 pounds of Sulfur Dioxide.

**Green Events Package.** The facility must offer a “green” or “environmentally-friendly” package for conferences, meetings, and other events; ie, you must be able to offer recycling and other waste minimizing elements to your “environmentally-aware” customers. To meet the “requirement”, it is hoped that your facility will at least offer a “green option” in your marketing package as an option to conference planners.

Event organizers for environmental organizations **simply MUST have recycling and double-sided copying** and consider other options for reducing wastes – otherwise, they hear it from their colleagues! However, these days, almost all event planners should be aware that a majority of their participants are likely to be “environmentally-aware”. What this means is that these participants might or might not say anything about it, but it bugs them that they can’t recycle while at the conference.

In addition to recycling, there are dozens of options to consider when planning an environmentally-friendly event. Please see the fact sheet on "Environmentally-Responsible Conferences & Events").