

Hotel/Motel Waste Reduction

GUEST ROOMS • HOUSEKEEPING

The checklists below identify cost-effective activities that also conserve resources and can save you money. If your property is not already conducting these activities, plan to incorporate them into your operations in the near future.

About 50 percent of a typical hotel's waste stream is recyclable, not including food wastes. Instituting a recycling program is a cost-effective way to reduce waste and save money.

Benefits

- * Save money on the purchase of products and packaging
- * Show your guests and community that you care about the environment
- * Boost employee morale

INFORMING YOUR GUESTS

Many ways exist to inform guests of the property's environmental initiatives. Send the messages clearly and often to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding. Use as many of the following techniques as possible to educate guests.

- Send an environmental message with reservation confirmations. For example, announce that guests can recycle papers and beverage containers in the rooms and lobby.
- Require staff to inform guests at check-in of environmental efforts such as the option to reuse towels.
- Use placards in rooms to inform guests of environmental efforts; for example, signs in bathrooms can tell how much waste the refillable dispensers for soap and shampoo have eliminated.
- Place signs near recycling bins in public areas and guest rooms that clearly show acceptable recyclable materials and that explain the positive environmental impact of recycling.

- Make sure employees, especially front desk and room service staff, can accurately and clearly respond to guest questions about the waste reduction options in effect.
- Whenever possible, convey your message in easy-to-understand terms with visual descriptions; for example, instead of telling guests that the property has recycled 300 pounds of bottles and cans, tell them how many trees or how much energy was saved.

ASSESSING PURCHASING DECISIONS

Keep in mind that hotels - like other businesses - pay for the use of items twice: once upon purchase and again at disposal.

Since most products purchased eventually end up in the hotel's waste stream, a purchasing assessment can determine if longer-lasting, repairable, and reusable items could replace shorter-lived, non-repairable, single-use products. Purchasing plays an especially important

role in waste prevention. Simply, if an item is not bought, it cannot be thrown away.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Low-Flow Faucets. Retrofit or replace shower heads with low-flow devices, and install faucet aerators on faucets.
- Low-flow shower heads can save a hotel 10 gallons of water for every five minute shower. That means saving over \$3,600 annually if 100 people shower each day, and water and sewer costs are 1¢ per gallon.
- Low-Flow Toilet Devices. Install water conservation devices, such as toilet dams or flapper balls, in older, water-guzzling toilets. These devices can save four gallons or more per flush, translating into annual savings of over \$5,800 if 100 guests flush four times per day.
- Full Loads. Operate clothes and dish washers only with full loads, and promptly repair all leaks.
- Wash Water. Wash clothes and linens in the coldest water that will do the job; hot water is usually only necessary for heavily soiled loads.

ENERGY SAVINGS

- Encourage staff to close drapes and turn off lights and air conditioning when rooms are unoccupied.
- Use glazing on windows throughout the hotel to prevent heat from building up, while still allowing light through. Consider purchasing energy-efficient windows if you need to upgrade.
- Install energy-efficient lighting fixtures in each room.
- Use motion sensor light switches or switches on a timer.
- Consider purchasing ENERGY STAR®-labeled TVs and other energy-efficient appliances.

IN THE ROOMS

- Use refillable soap and shampoo dispensers.
- Encourage guests to recycle by providing clearly marked recycling bins for cans, bottles and newspapers.
- Give the guest an option to have the towels and linens changed every other day or longer, rather than every day. Surveys have shown that more than 90 percent of guests like the option.
- Clean rooms with environmental cleaners to improve indoor air quality and reduce emissions of volatile organic chemicals.
- Use placards in the room to inform your guests about your "green" efforts.

HOUSEKEEPING

- Buy reusable cups, mugs, dishes and silverware for employee use. Consider including your company logo and employee names on the mugs.
- Institute a linen and towel policy that allows guests to request new linens/towels.
- Establish strict maintenance schedules for heating, cooling and appliances throughout your facility.
- Educate staff on your "green" programs and encourage their participation. Provide incentives for employee "green" suggestions.
- Ask for assistance from your housekeeping staff in monitoring the program. Have them inform you of areas with major contamination problems or where employees are not participating, and follow up with improved recycling education in these areas.
- Modify housekeeping carts or collection to separate out beverage containers, newspapers, etc.

- ❑ Purchase concentrated cleaning supplies in bulk and use refillable or recyclable bottles.
- ❑ Purchase laundry soaps in bulk and in concentrated form, and mix in reusable plastic spray bottles.
- ❑ Purchase vacuum cleaners with reusable bags vs. disposables.
- ❑ At least every six months, staff makes a point to vacuum all refrigerator coils, check and adjust all refrigerator temperatures, and check toilets for leaks.
- ❑ As towels wear out, they will be replaced with colored towels. Colored towels can be washed in lower water temperatures.
- ❑ Donate used furniture, linens and equipment to local nonprofit or charitable organizations.
- ❑ Use old towels and linens as rags for cleaning.
- ❑ Eliminate "sanitized for your protection" paper toilet strips.

OFFICE/MANAGER

- ❑ After policies have been established, explain the recycling program to your housekeeping staff. Train them by showing them what to do with new containers, how to collect waste separately and where to take separated materials.
- ❑ Reduce paper usage by making discarded paper into scratch pads and using double-sided copying.
- ❑ Install recycling bins for office paper, cans, bottles, newspapers and other wastes appropriate for your office. Also, recycle fax machine and copier cartridges (ask about local programs).
- ❑ Purchase energy-efficient computers, copiers and other equipment for your office.
- ❑ Purchase products that are recyclable and contain recycled content.