

## ***Best Practices for the Hospitality Industry***

The hotel and lodging industry is making great strides in reducing its environmental footprint. Now it is customary for hotels to offer guests a linen reuse option. Seattle hotels are saving 20-30 percent on waste disposal costs by implementing commercial compost collection programs. Many of the recent, major hospitality industry conferences and quarterly meetings have incorporated issues of sustainability and resource conservation. More and more hotels are responding to the effect climate change concerns are having on travel. Yet, significant opportunities still exist for hotels and lodging companies to save money and save resources.



The following comprehensive list of best practices is meant to inform those looking to achieve more sustainable business practices and enhance their understanding of sustainability in relationship to the hospitality industry and has been compiled from a variety of sources.

### **Kitchen/Restaurant**

*“The Library Bistro at the Alexis Hotel was able to recycle and compost 85-90% of their waste, saving us about \$6500 per year.” Carilyn Platt, Kimpton Hotel Group*

- Save 20-30 percent on your business’ waste bills by starting a commercial composting program and donating food to local meal programs.
- Purchase appliances rated efficient by the U.S. government’s Energy Star program.
- Hot food holding cabinets that have earned the Energy Star are 60 percent more energy efficient than standard models. Fryers that have earned the Energy Star are up to 25 percent more energy efficient than standard models. Steam cookers with the Energy Star offer shorter cook times, higher production rate and reduced heat loss due to better insulation and more efficient steam delivery.

#### **Food Steamers**

Receive a \$1,500 rebate to replace an inefficient food steamer with a new efficient steamer. The rebate, combined with utility savings, should reduce the payback period to two years or less.



#### **Spray Heads**

Replace pre-rinse dishwashing spray heads with more efficient models. A single spray head can use well over \$1,000 in water and energy each year. Installing a high efficiency spray head can cut this cost by 40% or more. Every minute you use an efficient head, you save over a gallon of water. Over the course of a year, this can translate into \$200 to \$900 of cost savings, depending on usage levels and utility rates.

#### **Commercial Dishwasher**

A model such as an ENERGY STAR® commercial dishwasher can save your hotel an average of \$850/year on energy bills and more than \$200/year and 52,000 gallons/year from using less water. These models use 25% less water and energy than standard commercial dishwashers. Use a dishwashing system that incorporates a water reuse option.

**Commercial Ice Machine**

On average, switching to an ENERGY STAR® unit can save about 1160 kWh annually, or an average of \$100/year on utility bills. In addition to energy savings, a new ice machine will consume less water, the equivalent to saving an additional \$10/year and 2700 gallons/ year.

**Commercial Refrigerator and Freezer**

You can reduce spending on your existing machine by reducing energy costs and water usage. Buying a unit that meets ENERGY STAR® criteria can lead to energy savings of as much as 35% with a 1.3 year payback. By purchasing commercial solid door refrigerators and freezers, buyers can expect to save \$170 annually per refrigerator and \$120 per freezer. Replacing all existing commercial solid door refrigerators and freezers in the U.S. with ENERGY STAR® labeled models would result in savings of almost \$250 million per year, or roughly 25% of the energy consumed by models currently on the market - the equivalent of eliminating the emissions from 475,000 cars.

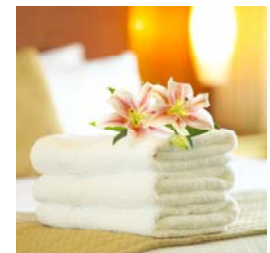
**Laundry****Commercial Clothes Washer**

When you replace your existing washer with an energy-efficient commercial washer, such as an ENERGY STAR® product, your hotel could reduce spending by about \$1,200 per washer from your utility bills over 10 years.

- Water reuse and ozone systems can qualify for rebates of up to 50%.

**Guest Rooms**

- Install energy management systems in guestrooms, meeting rooms and other public spaces.
- Turn off coffee makers, hair dryers and other appliances or personal electronics while guestrooms are unoccupied.
- Use dispensers for amenities instead of single-use disposable bottles.
- Implement a linen and towel reuse program.
- Repair leaky taps and toilets. Implement a preventive maintenance program to catch leaks.

**Toilet and Urinal Incentives**

Receive \$80 or \$120 toward the cost of each low-flow tank or flush valve fixture installed from the FlushStar list. Seattle Public Utilities also offers free tank toilets to business located in Seattle and Saving Water Partnership areas. There is no limit on quantity.

**Install faucet aerators in kitchen and bathroom sinks**

Inexpensive and simple to install, low-flow faucet aerators can reduce your business' water consumption as much as 50% and reduce your energy cost of heating the water also by as much as 50%.

**Plumbing**

You can save as much as 45-60% in energy costs by getting rid of your existing traditional storage tank water heater, and instead using a tankless water heater. Additionally, investing in a tankless water heater could enable you to receive a federal energy tax credit.

## Office

- In the office, use both sides of paper when making copies. Make discarded paper into message pads.
- Encourage your suppliers to use less waste. Buy only from those that do so.
- Buy recycled paper goods with a high percentage of post-consumer content for use in guestrooms, kitchen, housekeeping and other areas of the hotel. If possible, purchase goods that are easily biodegradable.
- Implement a recycling program for cans, bottles, cooking oil, phone books, plastic containers, computers, printer/toner cartridges, cardboard, newspaper, plastic and other items. Place recycling containers throughout the hotel, including the guestrooms.
- Shut down office equipment such as photocopiers and computer monitors when not in use.

## Meetings

- Offer Carbon Offset programs for your guests and your hotel operations
- Green Meeting Packages can include:
  - A recycling program
  - A linen/towel reuse option that is communicated to guests
  - Easy access to public transportation or shuttle services
  - Bulk dispensers or reusable containers for beverages, food and condiments
  - Reusable plates, glasses, utensils, serving utensils, napkins and tablecloths
  - Paperless check-in & check-out for guests
  - Use of recycled or recyclable products
  - Food sources from local growers or a policy to consider the growing practices of farmers who provide the food
  - A policy to use biobased or biodegradable products, including biobased cafeteriaware



## Cleaning & Maintenance

- Use **green housekeeping practices** which include the use of non-toxic cleaning fluids. White vinegar, baking soda, borax, hydrogen peroxide and rubbing alcohol are alternatives. Soda water can be used to clean windows and mirrors. Several companies also offer green cleaning products.
- Reuse condensate -Seattle hotels and hospitals with large heating and hot water requirements may have the opportunity to reuse condensate from steam heat at their facilities. These reclaim systems redirect steam condensate to alternative uses within the facility such as laundry.
- Occupancy sensors, which turn lighting, heating and cooling units on or off based on whether or not a person is present in a room, can reduce energy costs by as much as 50%.
- When purchasing paper towels, toilet paper, etc., look for products that include recycled paper content.



## Heating and Cooling

- Improperly maintained air handlers can waste up to 32 percent of the energy they consume. Check HVAC controls for proper calibration.
- Check all electrical systems for loose connections or poor motor conditions. Without proper preventive maintenance, these systems typically generate a 5 to 10 percent energy loss.
- Purchase renewable energy from your local utility.
- Retrofit property with high-efficiency condensing boilers, high-efficiency centrifugal chillers, and low-flow showerheads.
- Install demand-based ventilation systems controls, DDC controls and dry-bulb economizers on air handling units, and VSD's on room fan coil unit supply fans.
- Light Commercial Heating & Cooling: By using ENERGY STAR® qualified light commercial HVAC equipment, your hotel may use 7-10% less energy than the existing standard equipment.
  - Save approximately \$3-4 per square foot over the life of the equipment. For example, a 12,000 square foot building using an ENERGY STAR® qualified HVAC product could save \$36,000 to \$48,000.

## Lighting

- Switch to CFL light bulbs:
  - Fluorescent bulbs consume approximately 25% of the electricity that an incandescent bulb uses to produce the same amount of light. Fluorescent bulbs last anywhere from 4 to 15 times longer than incandescent bulbs.
  - CFLs generate 74% less heat than incandescent bulbs, therefore requiring less air conditioning to cool the same amount of space. Use efficient T5 and T8 fluorescent lamps.
  - Properly dispose of fluorescents. They contain a small amount of mercury. Several companies offer safe return container programs.



## Green Building/LEED EB

*“I believe LEED for Existing Buildings: O&M is a better fit for the hotel industry,” says Marc Heisterkamp, manager, LEED, Corporate & Investment Real Estate for USGBC.*

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has made revisions to its Leadership in energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Existing Buildings Rating System. Now called LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance (O&M), the system is a better fit for hotels and is attracting the interest of many of the leading hotel companies.

LEED for Existing Buildings: O&M performance standards address issues such as site maintenance, water conservation, indoor air quality, energy saving programs, recycling facilities and programs, purchasing practices, and green cleaning. The standards help provide direction for property managers and operators to cut operation costs and increase efficiency.

## **Grounds/Landscaping**

- Collect rainwater and use it for lawn and landscaping irrigation.
- Use native shrubs and plants, they require less water. Mulching can prevent up to 70 percent of evaporative loss.
- Detect and repair all leaks in your irrigation systems. Make sure the sprinklers are watering the landscaping only – not the street or sidewalk. Water your landscape at night or during the coolest part of the day and install moisture sensors to reduce unnecessary watering.

**Automatic Irrigation Systems** -Receive rebates to upgrade irrigation systems components with water saving devices such as controllers/clocks that automatically adjust watering schedules with real-time weather information, rain shut-off devices, and technologies that detect leaks and improve the distribution uniformity of sprinkler-heads. For sprinkler rebates and watering tips, please go to [www.savingwater.org](http://www.savingwater.org). For watering calculators and real-time weather information, please go to [www.iwms.org](http://www.iwms.org).

## **Establish a Plan and Promote Success**

### **Conduct a carbon footprint**

Operating costs, regulatory uncertainty, shareholder resolutions and consumer expectations are some of the many factors motivating companies to directly confront the climate challenge. Conducting a carbon footprint or greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory is the best way to identify and address carbon emissions. A

GHG inventory involves taking stock of all the emissions the organization is responsible for – those that are directly produced (e.g. travel in a company-owned vehicle) and those that are indirectly produced (e.g. employee commute travel). In addition to identifying ways to reduce emissions, hotel operators can partner with a carbon offset organization to offer your guests the option of offsetting their travel. Climate-friendly practices can result in significant cost-savings through increased efficiency and process improvements. With over 60 members, the [Seattle Climate Partnership](#) offers assistance and benefits to help employers reduce emissions, improve efficiencies, and successfully compete in a changing environment.



- Put together a written resource conservation plan. Key components should include increased recycling and waste management, water conservation, stormwater management, green building strategies and recycled content, non-toxic supply purchasing. The plan should also include staff involvement and education, facility audits, financial analysis, integrated building upgrades, equipment purchasing, new construction and preventive maintenance.

## **Sales and Marketing**

- Set aside a portion of your room inventory for EcoRooms, PURE rooms, Allergy Friendly Rooms or other similar green room programs that enable you to market your hotel as environmentally friendly.
- Enter awards programs that recognize environmental achievements.  
Participate in state or national green lodging certification programs. Prominently display membership plaques at the front desk.
- Publish an online booklet that tells your green story and make it available to meeting planners, guests and the media. Create an electronic newsletter to keep your loyal guests and staff up to speed on your green initiatives. Attend green industry events to help get the word out about your hotel. Offer yourself as a potential speaker or panelist for such an event.
- Partner with a carbon offset organization and offer your guests the option of offsetting their travel as well as organizations that plan large meetings at your hotel.

## **Resources:**

<b>Resource Venture:</b>	<b>Resource Venture</b>
<b>Hospitality News</b>	<b>Green Lodging News</b> <b>Hospitality Design Magazine</b> <b>Green Hotelier</b>
<b>Construction</b>	<b>US Green Building Council</b> <b>LEED Reference Guides</b>
<b>Energy</b>	<b>EnergyStar</b> <b>Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)</b>
<b>Water</b>	<b>Saving Water Partnership</b>
<b>Carbon Offsets</b>	<b>Travel Green</b> <b>TerraPass</b> <b>Carbonfund.org</b> <b>NativeEnergy</b> <b>Consumers' Guide to Retail Carbon Offsets Providers</b>