



Florida *Green Lodging* Program Best Management Practices



Communication and Education

Two of the most important parts of any environmental plan are the communication and education components. The communication component clearly relays to guests, employees, vendors, suppliers and contractors the facility's commitment to environmental protection. However, as important as the communication of environmental practices and achievements is, the only way to enact sustainable change is to provide some level of education to these groups.

Any environmental plan devoid of either of these components is bound for failure. The following Best Management Practices (BMPs) will assist the facility in successfully transferring information about environmental activities and will assist in promoting sustainable business practices.

Communication Best Management Practices

Clearly communicate environmental initiatives

The facility's environmental initiatives and achievements should be communicated to as large an audience as possible. Guest and employees are the primary targets of any communication but it is important not to overlook suppliers, vendors and contractors in your communication programs.

The following are examples of possible media to use in communicating initiatives and achievements:

- Place placards in guest room detailing towel and linen reuse programs.
- Post guidelines for recycling in guest rooms, vending areas, back of house and near or on any recycling and trash receptacles.
- Broadcast a short informational video showing the facility's environmental initiatives on in-room television services.
- Share environmental policies and expectations with suppliers and contractors.
- Post energy, water and waste performance statistics in employee areas.
- Include information about environmental initiatives in marketing and advertising materials.
- Place posters highlighting individual employee's environmental efforts and achievements.
- Include environmental initiatives and/or a green tip in employee newsletters.

Establish an environmental task force or Green Team to discuss, plan and execute environmental initiatives

The Green Team should include representatives from all operational areas. It is important to include all levels of employees, including management representatives. To achieve buy-in throughout the facility, consider appointing a team leader that is not on the facility's overall management team.

The Green Team should meet at least quarterly to review any environmental concerns, plan upcoming outreach events and discuss ideas to improve environmental performance.

Regularly discuss environmental practices at staff events and meetings

At least one environmental topic should be presented at each meeting. Invite outside speakers to address



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employee groups about smart environmental practices they can do at home and work.

Advertise and offer information on local eco-tourism options

In Florida, hotel guests often plan to spend a large amount of time outdoors during their visit. Provide guests with alternatives to the traditional planned excursions. Popular ideas include guided kayaking, fishing and sailing trips, informational nature tours and visits to state and local parks and recreation areas.

Provide a means for guests and employees to evaluate the facility's environmental practices

Possible evaluation tools include online evaluations, suggestion boxes or surveys. Review suggestions and evaluations to learn how the facility is perceived and to highlight possible environmental projects.

Publicly communicate environmental initiatives through advertising materials and web resources

Consistently update the public on current environmental initiatives and past successes through advertising materials and web resources. Publicize important environmental policies and expectations through the same approaches.

Regularly review all environmental policies, initiatives and actions for consistency and timeliness

Environmental policies need to be continually updated to reflect current practices and the most current information available.

Provide training to all levels of facility staff on environmental policies, procedures and initiative

Ensure that EVERY employee understands the facility's environmental policies and their role in implementing and following these policies. Training can be obtained from suppliers, vendors, local utility providers, water management districts and various environmental agencies.

Ensure that training on environmental policies and procedures is provided in languages according to staff need

Printed training materials should be translated to the most common non-English native language of the facility. Spoken training should be given in the listener's native language, where possible.

Serve as a Florida *Green Lodging* Program mentor to another property

Peer-to-peer training and education is invaluable. New environmental practices and policies are adopted faster if they have an industry champion. By serving as a Florida *Green Lodging* mentor to another facility, you can increase the level of positive environmental impact at a local level.