

Florida *Green Lodging* Program

Best Management Practice

Waste Reduction, Reuse and Recycling



Florida's tourism industry serves an estimated 98.9 million visitors annually. More than 50 percent of these visitors are hotel guests during some portion of their stay. The waste generated by these guests constitutes a large portion of the state's commercial waste stream. A hotel waste audit showed that most of the waste in a hotel is not produced in guest rooms, but in the Food and Beverage Department. If a hotel's waste is not reduced or recycled, it contributes to the state's overall environmental problems.

Many guests are familiar with recycling from home or work and are glad to continue the process when staying at a hotel.



The following information provides Best Management Practices (BMPs) relating to each area of waste reduction. Reducing waste creates a more efficient management process.

General Waste Reduction Best Management Practices

Conduct a facility-wide waste audit with your waste service provider: Your garbage hauler can determine what percentage of your waste stream is recyclable and right-size your garbage and recycling dumpsters accordingly. By moving much of your garbage stream to a recycling stream, you can downsize the garbage service. The savings from downsizing your garbage service could more than pay for your recycling service fees.

Track waste generation on a regular basis: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [WasteWise Program](#) offers a free web-based program to track your waste, recycling, and recycle content purchasing. Waste tracking will allow the facility to obtain measurements and data to assist in the waste reduction efforts by highlighting outstanding generation issues. Visit [ReTrac](#).

Properly identify, track, store and dispose of hazardous materials according to appropriate environmental regulations: Proper management of hazardous materials reduces the likelihood of exposure to guests, staff, and the environment. Common examples of possible hazardous materials are large volumes of paints, oils, chemicals, batteries, pool supplies, and spent fluorescent bulbs. These materials must be stored and disposed of according to the correct environmental regulations. Fluorescent and HID bulbs cannot be disposed of in normal trash receptacles. These bulbs must be properly stored and labeled in a padded container and disposed of through a hazardous waste collection service.

Prepare and follow a written waste reduction plan: Describe which staff will be responsible for each aspect of appropriate waste management. Pursue waste reduction at the source by working with suppliers to reduce packaging.

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Institute environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) policies: EPP or Green Purchasing is a set of policies that lead to direct waste reductions at the sources. Common types of EPP are buying products that have minimal packaging and participating in supplier or manufacturer take-back programs for items such as pallets and large containers.

Use refillable containers instead of single-use packets and containers: Instead of providing single-use toiletries and condiments, use refillable items. An example is using refillable shampoo/conditioner containers in the showers of guest rooms.

Set printers and copiers to duplex printing by default: By printing on both sides, also called duplex printing, paper usage can be reduced by up to 50 percent. Change the default settings on all printers and copiers to print in duplex mode.

Eliminate the use of polystyrene (Styrofoam) and plastic food service containers: Plastic and polystyrene food service containers take up valuable space in landfills and are not biodegradable. By substituting these products with biodegradable and compostable materials, less waste will be generated.



Reduce the purchasing of excess or inventory materials: Buy only what is needed in the short term to reduce excess materials and waste.

Remove or eliminate the storage and use of hazardous chemicals: Although hazardous chemicals may be needed for certain appliances, try to move away from them where possible. Examples include switching from traditional cleaning chemicals to green cleaners. Green cleaners often have less stringent storage requirements than traditional cleaners and can lead to reduced green products. Visit [Green Seal](#), [EPA Safer Choice](#) Labeling, or [EcoLogo](#) to learn more.

Reuse Waste Reduction Best Management Practices

Use old or discarded office paper for notepads or packaging materials:

Used office paper can easily be cut into squares and reused as office notepads. This is especially true if the paper is only printed on one side. If duplex printing is used, shred paper for reuse as packaging material for shipping and in gift shops.

Donate any excess items, such as food, toiletry items, furniture, electronics, and linens to local charities or other social service organizations: Donate any items that can still be used to local charities or other social service organizations. This will extend the life cycle of these usable products instead of sending them to the landfill. If items cannot be donated to local charities, arrange for a

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system to sell the items to employees. Construction and demolition supplies can also be reused in this manner.

Compost excess food and landscape trimmings: In areas where excess prepared food items cannot be donated to local charities, compost these materials. As with excess food, landscape trimmings should not be sent to a landfill. These materials can be shredded or chipped and reapplied as soil amendments. Such services can be arranged through local agricultural and landscaping resources.

Supply reusable goods in place of disposable goods: Common examples of reusable goods include cloth linens, glass or hard plastic drinking containers, refillable soap, cleaning supplies, toiletry containers, and plates and cutlery items. These good can be supplied not only to guest areas of the facility but to back of house areas as well.

Recycling Waste Reduction Best Management Practices

Develop an onsite recycling programs from as many waste materials as possible: Commonly recycled materials include aluminum, landscape waste, newspapers, cooking grease, food waste, glass, carpet, building materials, motor oils and liquids, plastic bottles and buckets, magazines, and batteries. Recycling services for all the above may not be available in your area. Check your local Recycling Coordinator on the availability of commercial recycling. You can find your local recycling coordinators on the DEP website at [Recycling Program](#). Institute recycling programs for as many as possible.



Locate recycling containers and bins next to trash receptacles: The most successful recycling programs make it easy to participate. Locating recycling containers next to trash receptacles will lead to an increased success rate for the recycling program. Also, provide easy instructions and directions on where these bins are located to both guests and staff.

Clearly communicate what can be recycled: Materials that are accepted for recycling should be clearly communicated to both guests and facility staff. One common way is to clearly define acceptable materials on the recycling containers themselves. Often a large print sticker can be used.

Florida *Green Lodging* Program

Best Management Practice

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Purchase recycled content supplies: Participate in environmentally preferable purchasing by procuring materials that are made with recycled content instead of first-generation content. If possible, purchase supplies that contain at least 30 percent post-consumer recycled content. Common examples of items containing at least 30 percent post-consumer content are toilet tissue, paper towels, facial tissue, envelopes, office paper, and kitchen napkins.

Print advertising, educational and promotional materials on recycled paper or materials: Printing on recycled content paper will lead to less pollution and energy consumption during the paper production process compared to that of paper not yet used.

