

## Hospitality Pollution Prevention -- Hotels, Travel & Tourism

This tip sheet is part of a series of pollution prevention tip sheets focusing on different business sectors. Travel and tourism is one of the largest industries in the State of Alaska and Anchorage is a major hub for travelers accessing the rest of the State.

The Anchorage area hosts about 130 hotels, motels, and RV camps, employing almost 3,000 people. According to the Alaska Travel Industry Association, throughout the State, there are more than 1,100 large and small tourism-related businesses associated with ATIA alone.

Overall, visitors spend about \$1000 each while in Alaska. During the summer of 2007, more than 1.7 million visitors came to Alaska.

### Why Hospitality & Tourism?

In a study conducted in the 1990s in Toronto, more than 90% of the people surveyed felt that a concern for the environment was important in their accommodations. In addition, "ecotourism" is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry (4-10% per annum).

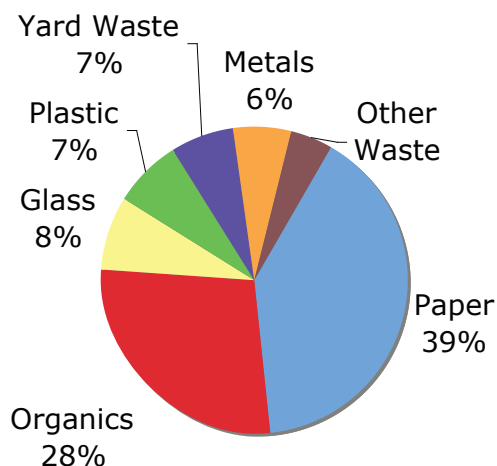
The hospitality industry uses a surprising amount of resources to provide services. An average-sized hotel purchases more products in one week than 100 families do in one year. Waste generation can be as high as 30 pounds per room per day, and up to 80% can be recycled.

Besides waste generation, the hospitality industry also uses huge quantities of energy and water, spending \$3.7 billion a year on energy. Electricity use accounts for 60 to 70% of the utility costs of a typical hotel. Typical hotels use 218 gallons of water per day per occupied room.

See these tip sheets for more details about where savings can be realized:

- Purchasing (Tip Sheets #1, #20, #21, #22)
- Offices (Tip Sheets #2 & #3)
- Food and Beverage Service (Tip Sheet #16)
- Recycling (Tip Sheet #3)
- Maintenance (Tip Sheets #4-8, #18, #19)
- Landscaping (Tip Sheet #8)

### Waste Composition of a Typical Hotel



### Success Stories

The **Ritz-Carlton** in Pasadena, CA, determined just the right amount of chemicals to use in laundering, saving \$45,000 in one year.

Each month, the **Ritz-Carlton** in Naples, FL, avoids discarding 150 pounds of worn bath towels by converting them into cleaning rags and dishtowels for kitchen staff. Each year, the hotel makes about 800 aprons from used table linens.

The Seattle **Sheraton Hotel and Towers** donated 2000 telephones from guest rooms to a local housing organization, which made them available to low-income tenants.

At the 960-room **Boston Park Plaza Hotel**, installing a dispenser system for soap, shampoo, hair conditioner, body lotion, and mouthwash eliminated nearly two million individual plastic containers per year and saved 20¢ per occupied room per night.

After the winter holiday season, **Chateau Whistler**, in British Columbia, replants its live (potted) Christmas trees on the resort's golf course.

The **Radisson Hotel** in Asheville, NC, cut laundry costs from \$1.50 to \$0.75 per load by instituting a program allowing guests to choose to not have linens and towels changed daily. Cost savings include hot water, labor, detergent, and linen purchases.

## Housekeeping Waste Prevention

Guest rooms can generate up to 28 pounds per day of waste, generating food, packaging, paper and other wastes.

- Reduce newspaper waste by providing newspapers in a central location such as the lobby or restaurant rather than distributing them to each guest room. For more personalized service, consider offering a door hanger for those who want in-room delivery.
- Eliminate unwanted or under-used amenities such as shower caps and shoe shine cloths. These items can be offered by request.
- Replace disposable room amenities with refillable or reusable substitutes. The savings achieved by switching can be used to upgrade to higher quality lotions and shampoos.
- Donate to local charities and shelters. This can include items from soap and toiletries to linens and furniture that is no longer wanted but still usable.
- Reuse damaged or stained linens and towels. They can be cut for aprons, used for cleaning cloths. Animal shelters also appreciate donations of linens and towels.
- Choose durable and reusable goods. Stock guest rooms with reusable mugs and glasses and use high-quality linens and towels that will last through many launderings.
- Do not replace soap for stayover guests. A bar of soap should last a guest several days and if not, the guest can open a new soap stocked in the room. Replacing opened soaps daily is extremely wasteful.

### Behavior is Key

Many hotels/motels have instituted a program to allow multi-day guests to request that sheets and towels not be changed. This type of program can save thousands of dollars in electricity, water, chemical and labor costs. Unfortunately, these programs rarely work as well as they are designed due to behavior issues on the part of both guests and housekeeping staff.

If you institute such a program, be sure that 1) the instructions in the room are clear and easy and 2) housekeeping staff is fully and repeatedly trained with spot checks to ensure compliance.



## Meetings & Conferences

If your facility is large enough to host meetings, conference or conventions, you have invited another waste-generating aspect to your operation.

The average trade show attendee takes home up to ten pounds of paper and the typical expo generates the equivalent of 170 trees in paper waste.

There are things you can do at your facility to reduce event wastes, and information you can provide to event planners and participants to encourage waste reduction.

- Announce to participating corporations, associations and attendees, through mailings or, preferably, emails, that waste prevention and recycling will be taking place at the event.
- Encourage all vendors and exhibitors to participate in waste prevention and recycling programs. Include outreach materials in publications for venue and event managers.
- Visit [www.greenstarinc.org/geoutreach.php](http://www.greenstarinc.org/geoutreach.php) for detailed waste prevention and recycling flyers for event vendors and planners.
- Contact Green Star for information about Green Events, a program designed to assist event planners set up recycling for one-time, temporary events.
- Ensure that all signs and instructions are clear when vendors, exhibitors, staff, and event-goers arrive.

• Ask vendors to reduce waste by printing promotional materials on both sides, not dating materials so it can be used at other shows, and providing as much information as possible electronically.

• Encourage using recyclable materials, such as paper signs instead of plastic/vinyl.

• Discourage the distribution of wasteful gifts and promotions that attendees are likely to discard after the conference.

• Encourage reuse of booth materials, such as carpeting, banners, signage. If not reusable for another booth, suggest donating these items. Rent other decor such as furniture and plants.



## Facilities

Facilities maintenance includes energy and water use. A property with 350 guest rooms can spend \$300,000 per year in electricity. Simple changes such as installing compact fluorescent lamps in guest room light fixtures can make a big difference.



## Water Conservation

Even more surprising than the energy use is that the average U.S. hotel uses 218 gallons of water per day per occupied room. Water-efficient fixtures can save 25 to 30% on water and sewer bills. Consider installing low-flow showerheads, many of which actually can enhance the water pressure rather than decrease it, so guest satisfaction is not diminished.

In guestrooms, if the shower is turned on and water is coming from the bathtub spout as well as from the showerhead, then the tub diverter, the diverter gasket or the whole mechanism should be replaced immediately. Water lost in this manner is totally wasted, and you're paying for wastewater treatment as well. This is a common problem, especially in older properties.

### Energy Management Systems Save Hotels Money

Energy Management Systems can help hotel owners to realize tremendous cost savings. By controlling guest room lighting and other energy use, managers can save 30-40% in energy costs.

One such system involves installing master switches in the entrance of each room, which require a room key tag to activate them. All non-essential energy demands (heating, air conditioning, lighting, radio and television) are linked to the master switch.

When guests leave the room and remove their key tag from the master switch, all non-essential energy demands are immediately switched off. Essential appliances such as refrigerators, alarm clocks, and power points for recharging mobile phones and shavers remain on.

Visit these sites for system examples:  
Onity ([www.onity.com](http://www.onity.com))  
Inncom ([www.inncom.com](http://www.inncom.com))  
WattStopper ([www.wattstopper.com](http://www.wattstopper.com))

## How We Did It

**Alaska Wildland Adventures**, a Green Star Awardee, has developed a working manual for reducing its environmental impact, called the Greenwork Program. The 30-page document outlines the organization's mission and its environmental activities while acting as an employee manual for expected recycling, composting, and waste prevention activities.

The **Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association (AWRTA)** developed a program called Dollars a Day for Conservation to help fund conservation groups. In 2001, 35 business participants raised more than \$25,000 for conservation organizations.

**Alyeska Resort, Kenai Fjords National Park, Major Marine Tours, and Alaska Wildland Adventures** are all participants in Denali Green Tags' Tour Green program specifically design to offset carbon dioxide emissions from tourism activities in Alaska. These organizations have purchased Green Tags themselves and offer ways for guests to offset their own travel emissions.

**Royal Celebrity Tours**, a Green Star Awardee, in an effort to save money and reduce emissions, tracked the time its motor coaches spent idling before and after implementing an idle-reduction initiative. In sampling 13 coaches over two three-year periods, the company found idling time had been reduced by almost 17%.

The **Alaska Railroad Corporation**, a Green Star Awardee, has reduced train emissions dramatically through the purchase of lower-emission locomotives, installing Idle Time Reduction Systems on about half of all locomotives, and switching to Ultra Low Sulphur diesel fuel ahead of EPA mandates, to name a few.

## Kitchen Water Use

If your establishment has kitchen facilities, one of the easiest and most effective water-saving tools in which you can invest is the low-flow pre-rinse spray valve for use in the dishwashing area. Purchasing this simple device can reduce water use by as much as 80%.

If used just three hours per day, a low-flow pre-rinse spray valve can save up to 180 gallons of water per day. Visit [www.fishnick.com/equipment/sprayvalves](http://www.fishnick.com/equipment/sprayvalves) for details.

## ***In-State Travel & Tourism***

Alaska thrives on its travel and tourism industry. It is the second largest income-generating industry in the State. The industry includes cruise lines, the rail system, tour bus operations, flightseeing companies, sportfishing trips, sleddog excursions, and the numerous other operations that provide Alaskans and tourists with a way to enjoy all the State has to offer.

The opportunities within each of these unique segments of the overall hospitality, travel and tourism industry to reduce waste are as vast as the state itself.



- Incorporate “green” practices into as many of your daily activities as possible.
- Look at the basics, then look at what activities are unique to your segment of the industry.
- Start behind the scenes, then roll out programs in which your customers and clients can participate.

### **Local and State Resources**

Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant & Retailer’s Association (CHARR) ~ [www.alaskacharr.com](http://www.alaskacharr.com)

Alaska Travel Industry Association  
[www.alaskatia.org](http://www.alaskatia.org)

Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Association & Alaska Institute for Sustainable Recreation & Tourism  
[www.awrta.org](http://www.awrta.org)

Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau  
[www.anchorage.net](http://www.anchorage.net)

B&B Association of Alaska  
[www.alaskabba.com](http://www.alaskabba.com)

Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP)  
[www.alaskarenewableenergy.org](http://www.alaskarenewableenergy.org)

- Visit the resources on this page to identify specific initiatives that could work for you.
- Keep track of what you’ve done so you have evidence of the cost savings and other benefits.
- Let your customers know what you are doing to decrease your environmental impact. It’s a selling point!

### **National and International Resources**

Energy Star for Hospitality  
[www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb\\_lodging.sb\\_lodging](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb_lodging.sb_lodging)

Great Lakes Regional Pollution Prevention Roundtable  
[www.glrppr.org/sectors](http://www.glrppr.org/sectors)

“Green” Hotels Association ~ [www.greenhotels.com](http://www.greenhotels.com)

Green Hotel Initiative (CERES)  
[www.ceres.org/our\\_work/ghi.htm](http://www.ceres.org/our_work/ghi.htm)

Green Hotelier [magazine] ~ [www.greenhotelier.org](http://www.greenhotelier.org)

Green Meeting Industry Council  
[www.greenmeetings.info](http://www.greenmeetings.info)

The Green Plan for Hotels  
[www.p2pays.org/hospitality](http://www.p2pays.org/hospitality)

Green Seal (hotels project and certification)  
[www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)

Pollution Solutions -  
Waste Reduction Assistance for Business: Hotels/Motels  
<http://outreach.missouri.edu/polsol/hotel.htm>

Project Planet ~ [www.projectplanet.biz](http://www.projectplanet.biz)

Waste Reduction in Hotels  
<http://wrrc.p2pays.org/industry/hotels.htm>

Western Regional Pollution Prevention Network -  
Topic Hub for Hospitality  
[www.westp2net.org/hub/toc.cfm?hub=14&subsec=7&nav=7](http://www.westp2net.org/hub/toc.cfm?hub=14&subsec=7&nav=7)



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Good for Business ~ Good for the Community ~ Good for the Environment