

Hotel Housekeeping Best Practices and Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Within the hospitality sector, housekeepers are expected to contribute to the success of daily operations and to a positive guest experience. The *2018 Sustainability Travel Report* prepared by Booking.com revealed that 87 percent of global travellers are interested in eco-friendly room options.¹ Staying competitive in the rapidly changing hospitality industry is challenging, so developing environmentally-preferable purchasing practices can be a perfect way to appeal to those sustainability-minded guests while reducing chemical use, lowering waste generation and saving money at the same time.

How to Get Started

Join the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WasteWise program. This program encourages businesses to use sustainable best practices and promote various methods of waste reduction.² Green programs like WasteWise can be used to show guests that a hotel is making sustainable changes not only within the rooms but also throughout the entire establishment.

Shift to recycled or low waste products and always opt for the highest quality alternatives. High quality durable products can help you reduce the average 2.2 lbs. of waste produced from each nightly stay.³

Safer Choice for Cleaning Supplies

Some hotel rooms do not have windows that can open easily for ventilation, so it is important to be mindful about the chemicals that are used for cleaning. Furthermore, cleaning tools used in housekeeping can be harmful to the health of your guests and staff. The CDC recognizes chemical hazards as part of the National Occupational Research Agenda that affects housekeepers. It is vital to regularly train workers on proper handling and disposal procedures to ensure that personal protective equipment (PPE) is used when dealing with chemicals.⁴ Choose products with U.S. EPA's Safer Choice logo to certify that the quality of the cleaners will put the safety of guest health and the environment to a higher standard.⁵ There are roughly 2,500 Safer Choice products available that are manufactured with safe chemicals for a wide variety of cleaning tasks. Be sure to compare products, as there are plenty of options to choose from to find the perfect substitute cleaner.⁶



Areas for Solid Waste Reduction

Observe the stocking and staging practices that are currently being used in housekeeping routines. Identify areas of opportunity relating to these practices such as the level of necessity, type of material, and packaging methods. Recent findings show that 79 percent of guests would willingly choose a hotel that used recycled toilet paper and changed toiletries less frequently.⁷ Identifying areas where this demand can be met may not only reduce waste generation but also attract a wider clientele base.

Based on Guest Usage

- Remove plastic liners from ice buckets and provide on request; reuse liners for trash/recycling
- Seldom used amenities should be provided to guests upon request (i.e. shower cap, tooth brush)
- Offer newspaper deliveries only upon request **Purchase**

Better Products

- When purchasing disposable cups avoid plastic and Styrofoam. Instead, choose biodegradable paper cups made from 100 percent recycled material
- Choose toilet tissue brands that use responsibly sourced paper or contain 100 percent recycled material
- For larger public bathrooms with paper towels, choose brands with green logos that certify its sourcing such as Green Seal, or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)^{8,9}

Alternative Options for the Hotelier

Consider substituting:

- Bath/shower gel bottles with refillable soap dispensers
- Disposable cups with glass cups
- Plastic laundry bags with baskets or cloth
- Paper towels with cloth towels or electric hand dryers
- Paper room service menus with durable, reusable menus

Choose BioPreferred

For custodial service, personal care and toiletries, seek out brands that use renewable agriculture or plant-based material. The USDA BioPreferred program manages products

for purchasing to utilize alternatives that consider the environment in production.¹⁰

Sustainable Practices for a Better Tomorrow

Develop a responsible procurement policy. Consider your snack bar as an opportunity to establish this policy by buying locally and seeking out fair trade goods. Utilize a Green Team to develop ideas for sustainable practices such as buying recycled fiber pillows or reusing stained towels as rags and pool towels.

Allow your employees the opportunity to provide input on the amenities provided in each room. Ask your staff about the waste that they encounter most frequently and discuss ways to lower the production of popular items found after each checkout.

Organizations like Clean the World have been a popular nonprofit group for hotels to partner with because they take advantage of partially used soap containers and donate them to humanitarian relief.¹² Plastic straws have been a hot topic for waste reduction. Hotel Congress in Tucson, AZ was able to reduce their straw purchases by 10,000 after joining and participating in the *1 Less Straw Partnership Program*.¹³

Success Stories

Recycled Product Savings

The Dover Downs Hotel & Casino in Delaware saved \$30,000 by purchasing sustainable facial and toilet tissue, napkins and hand towels over a 12-month period.¹³

Big Picture Changes

At Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, they made widespread changes by developing a Green Procurement Policy for all-future purchasing and utilized it to educate suppliers to minimize packaging waste. Fairmont now uses locally sourced beverages (such as tea and wine) and have become a member of Ethical Tea Sourcing. In addition, they have adopted the use of FSC certified paper for all stationaries and brochures for the hotel.¹⁴

Chemical Reduction and Savings

The Courtyard Newark at University of Delaware has made great strides with chemical control in custodial services. General Manager Tracy Holmes explained, "We've reduced the chemicals we use from eleven to five, and have cut our costs by 60 percent." She goes on to note that housekeeping staff was hesitant to incorporate the new changes, but after explaining the health benefits, they felt confident to follow through with the adjustments.¹⁴

References

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14. [Green Hotelier: Responsible Procurement](#)



RESOURCE SUMMARY
