

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



FOR SOUTH CAROLINA'S HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

South Carolina's hospitality industry is a large consumer. Each facility purchases goods and services, creates and manages waste, uses energy and water, and just like an individual leaves an environmental footprint. Operating in an environmentally responsible fashion, the state's hospitality industry can lead by example with everyday, cost-effective practices that help protect and preserve South Carolina's environment as well as the quality of life for all South Carolinians. This "Best Management Practices" (BMP) fact sheet is part of a series.

Air Quality

Practices to improve air quality have become increasingly important in the hospitality industry. The reasons are simple – air quality affects many areas of operation. The health of your guests and staff, equipment efficiencies, insurance premiums and your profitability can be negatively impacted by poor air quality.

Clearly, air quality should be a priority at any facility.

Just what causes air quality problems?

There are many sources of indoor and outdoor air pollution. These include:

- * the burning of fuels such as oil, gasoline, kerosene, coal, wood and tobacco products;
- * pesticides;
- * building materials and furnishings such as old insulation, damp carpet, and cabinetry or furniture made of specific pressed wood;
- * cleaning and maintenance products; and
- * central heating and cooling systems and humidification equipment.

There are many ways to improve air quality.

The following best management practices are recommended for improving air quality at your facility.

* **Develop a plan to improve the indoor air quality at your facility.** The plan, which should be an integral part of the facility's overall environmental plan, should list air quality goals, highlight issues and set specific air quality targets based on those issues.

* **Eliminate mold and mildew.** The most common causes of mold and mildew are leaks, condensation and poor ventilation. Continually check for leaks and, if found, repair immediately. Properly vent moisture-generating appliances to the outside. Maintain indoor humidity between 35 and 55 percent. For more specific information on how to prevent or address mold and mildew problems, visit www.epa.gov/mold.

* **Address water and moisture problems immediately.** Water damaged materials such as bedding or carpet can develop harmful mold growth within 48 hours.

* **Properly maintain heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems.** For a list of specific recommendations, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/greenlodging/bmp_indoor.htm.

* **Properly vent areas such as kitchens and laundry rooms.** Kitchens and laundry rooms often contain high levels of moisture and are at an increased risk of developing mold and mildew. Laundry rooms may have high levels of dust and

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The Green Hospitality Program is offered by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office). To learn about the program or for help setting up, implementing or improving green practices, call the Office at 1-800-768-7348 or visit www.scdhec.gov/greenhospitality.

other particulate matter in the air. Kitchens may contain respiratory irritants such as seasonings and smoke.

- * **Maintain a smoke-free facility.** Eliminate smoking from all indoor areas. If smoking is allowed outside, position all smoking areas away from doors, windows, intake fans, air return ducts and sitting areas.
- * **Clean green.** Use green cleaning products that contain environmentally friendly ingredients to protect human health and the environment. Check labels for biodegradable ingredients and other product information. Choose products with low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Visit www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/cleaning.htm for more information on green cleaning products and practices.
- * **Use paints and finishes with no or low VOCs.** The use of paint and finishes with high levels of VOCs has been shown to cause health problems. The use of paints and finishes with low VOCs not only protects human health, but also reduces disposal and cleanup costs.
- * **Eliminate or reduce the use of deodorizers, products containing chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) and aerosols in guest rooms, common areas and offices.** Using deodorizers and aerosols to mask the odors of cigarettes, mold and mildew can lead to respiratory distress. Instead, correct the cause of the odors.
- * **Properly label, store, track and recycle or dispose of all chemicals.** Proper management of chemicals reduces the chances of hazardous exposure to guests and staff as well as releases to the environment.
- * **Landscape more. Mow less.** Consider planting native shrubs and flowers. These require less water and reduce the area that needs to be

mowed. This helps reduce emissions from gasoline-powered equipment.

- * **Use integrated pest management practices.** Integrated pest management is a coordinated system of managing pests that combines inspection, monitoring, treatment and evaluation with a special emphasis placed on the decreased use of toxic agents.
- * **Discourage vehicle idling, particularly at the lobby and loading areas.** Consider placing signage to encourage drivers to turn off engines. Visit www.scdhec.gov/environment/baq/b2/whatisb2.asp to learn more about the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) Anti-Idling/Clean Air Campaign.
- * **Drive "green" vehicles.** Consider using hybrid or alternative-fuel vehicles (e.g., flex-fuel or low-sulfur diesel) for trips between the hotel and airport or for your restaurant's catering operation. Before buying, leasing or renting a vehicle, see the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) "Green Vehicle Guide" at www.epa.gov/greenvehicles. Also see the EPA's and U.S. Department of Energy's "Fuel Economy Guide" at www.fueleconomy.gov.
- * **Promote your facility's commitment to improving air quality to your staff.** Provide educational material and training to staff on the importance of clean air practices. Emphasize the importance of identifying, reporting and addressing smaller concerns before they become larger, more expensive problems.
- * **Promote your facility's commitment to improving air quality to guests and the public.** Increased awareness by guests will help your facility meet its clean air goals in a more timely and cost-effective manner. In addition, your successful and effective clean air program will enhance the marketability of your facility as an environmentally friendly business.



The S.C. Green Hospitality Alliance is a free, voluntary program designed to: 1) help South Carolina's hospitality industry reduce the environmental impact of its operations as well as incorporate environmental stewardship and sustainability in its business practices; and 2) promote and recognize member hotels, restaurants as well as other hospitality facilities for their environmentally conscious practices. The Alliance was developed in partnership by the S.C. Restaurant & Lodging Association and DHEC's Green Hospitality Program.

For more information, call DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling at 1-800-768-7348 or visit www.scdhec.gov/greenhospitality.

