

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.

Green Cleaning

Green cleaning is commonly defined as cleaning to protect human health without harming the environment. It is a comprehensive approach that combines environmentally preferred product and equipment choices, green housekeeping practices, training and communication to produce a safe and effective cleaning program.

Green cleaning is smart business for the hospitality industry. It can help your facility reduce waste, increase efficiency, protect the health of your customers and staff, protect the indoor as well as outdoor environment, and may even cost less than traditional cleaning methods. In addition, green cleaning and other green practices allow you to market your facility as an environmentally friendly business.

It's easy to set up a green cleaning program.

It may seem a little intimidating to consider changing from a traditional cleaning approach to green cleaning, but it doesn't have to be. There is no one right way. The program can be developed step-by-step.

In addition, there are many resources available to help you go green. Those resources include representatives from your product distributor who cannot only help you with green product choices but also how to correctly use them. In addition, there are highly respected third-party organizations such as Green Seal that certify products including commercial cleaning products. For more information, visit www.greenseal.org.

One of the first key steps recommended is to conduct a cleaning product assessment (see reverse page) to help

evaluate what products are being used, where and in what amount.

Buying green cleaning products should be incorporated into the operations of your hotel, motel, restaurant or bar. Here are some basic recommendations for hospitality facilities.

- * **Buy in bulk or concentrates.** Liquid concentrate can save money, reduce waste and conserve natural resources by reducing packaging.
- * **Buy products that biodegrade, have low toxicity and low volatile organic compounds (VOCs).** This helps limit the amount of harmful impacts to staff and guests whether it is direct contact with the product or through indoor air quality.
- * **Buy products with low or no-allergens.** Many chemicals found in cleaning products can trigger allergies. Although children and the elderly are the most likely to be affected by these, anyone can feel the affects and never make the connection between the two.

Always follow the directions.

Chemicals in cleaning products contaminate our environment through evaporation, run-off, spills, leaks and over-application. Here are a few key recommendations.

- * **Follow directions.** Chemical and mixing areas must have proper ventilation as well as adequate and secure storage space.

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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.

- * **Drains should be plumbed for disposal of liquid waste.**
- * **Bottles must be properly labeled with the product and its use.** Consider using colors and not just the product name to coordinate the dilution system with the bottle. This can be useful to overcome any language barriers.

Green Housekeeping Practices

Green cleaning means green housekeeping practices, too. Here are some basic recommendations.

- * **Train staff to use products correctly.** Over application not only waste product and

cost money, but also may harm the environment.

- * **Facilities are encouraged to use a vacuum cleaner with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter** to help protect indoor air quality. To learn more, visit www.carpet-rug.org/residential-customers/cleaning-and-maintenance/seal-of-approval-products/vacuums.cfm.
- * **Facilities are encouraged to place mats at every outside door** and keep them clean.
- * **Staff should be trained to vacuum** or “damp mop” instead of sweeping.

For more information on green cleaning practices to improve indoor air quality, visit www.informinc.org/reportpdfs/chp/CleaningForHealth.pdf.

Conduct a green cleaning assessment.

Remember, the outcome of this assessment does not affect points received in the S.C. Green Hospitality Alliance application. Conducting a cleaning assessment will help evaluate the products being used, where they are being used and in what amounts. This is the first step in identifying opportunities for improvement as well as form a better understanding of the use and hazards of cleaning agents and their chemicals.

After the results of your assessment are compiled, discuss with your distributor/manufacturer ways to improve your current process. As new environmentally friendly techniques and products hit the market, a company does not always advertise these alternatives to current clients. Let them know you are interested in less toxic, more sustainable options.

Questions to Ask When Conducting Your Assessment ...

1. **Products** – Evaluate the cleaning products used throughout the entire facility. Decide if all products are required.
2. **Hazards** – A hazard level acknowledges how safe a product is for your staff, guests, fixtures and the environment. How many products in your facility are a hazard level 2 or above (with the exception of disinfectant cleaners)?
3. **“Green”** – Does the manufacturer claim their products are “green?” If so, what supports their claim?
4. **Partnerships** – Are you working with product sales representatives to help create a green cleaning program specific to your facility?
5. **Training** – Who monitors and reinforces green cleaning practices? How often do you train and retrain?



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.

