

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 Meetings and Catering

Providing green meetings and catered events offers economical and environmental benefits.

These once quick-growing trends are becoming standard. More than meeting expectations, this fact sheet can help you exceed those standards, giving you a competitive edge.

When your next client asks about environmental considerations, the following information will have prepared you by giving insight to their needs.

Environmental Sustainability Policy

Have an Environmental Sustainability Policy that highlights your initiatives. Make your efforts known by including:

- * **SUSTAINABLE FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION:** Are you within walking distance of a convention center or downtown area? Do you promote public transportation? Include why choosing your location can be green before and after the meeting.
- * **MINIMAL ENERGY USE:** Are you using natural lighting when possible? Do you reduce your use of HVAC until after the event is set up? Are LED and CFL lighting used?

* **WATER CONSERVATION:** Is water provided with pitchers and served in reusable glassware? Do bathroom facilities have water-saving devices and fixtures?

* **WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING:** If recycling is available to event attendees as well as behind the scenes, let your potential clients know. Displaying your recycling program goes beyond stating it in a policy. By providing containers that are conveniently located and clearly labeled, you will show attendees you are serious about your environmental efforts. Does your facility provide note pads and pens for meetings? If so, include in your policy that they are only provided upon request and made from recycled-content materials.

* **SUSTAINABLE FOOD:** Do you purchase organic or locally grown food and drink? Are condiments bought in bulk as opposed to portion control? These and other environmentally considerate purchases should be included in your policy.

Environmental Impact Report

An Environmental Impact Report is a great way to measure your efforts while helping event planners and attendees better understand how they effect the environment as well.

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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.

At a minimum, the following should be included:

- * recycling weight for aluminum/cans, cardboard, glass, paper and plastic;
- * disposal (landfill) weight for non-recyclables including food;
- * weight of food donated and/or composted;
- * percent of food that was locally grown; and
- * carbon offset to reduce environmental impact of meeting. This may be a list of options available to clients, ideas of what they can do to offset their actions during a meeting at your facility.

Carbon Offset

Looking for resources on carbon offset? The following organizations and Web sites can help you measure and understand your impact, while providing ways to counteract emissions.

- * **Carbonfund.org** – “Reduce what you can, offset what you can’t.” This organization provides climate changes education, carbon offsets and reductions along with public outreach. Visit www.carbonfund.org.
- * **Climate Trust** – This nonprofit organization provide carbon offsets, customized voluntary offset programs and climate consulting services. Visit www.climatetrust.org.

Green Catering Resources

- * **Feeding America** is the nation’s leading domestic hunger-relief charity by distributing more than 2.5 billion pounds of food and grocery products annually. Visit <http://feedingamerica.org>.

- * **Earthwarebiodegradables.com** offers a list of vendors that provide cups, cutlery, dishes, storage containers and napkins that are made from recycled content or made from easily renewable resources and are biodegradable. Visit www.earthwarebiodegradables.com.

- * **The S.C. Department of Agriculture** (SCDA) offers information on local products and recognizes South Carolinians who grow, harvest and process them with their **Certified S.C. Grown program**. For details, visit www.certifiedscgown.com. For restaurants, SCDA have developed the **Fresh on the Menu** program, where participating chefs agree to prepare menus that include at least 25 percent certified South Carolina-grown foods and products in season. Visit www.certifiedscgown.com/freshonthemenu.

More Resources

Other resources for hosting green meetings and events:

- * **“Simple Steps to Green Meetings and Events: The Professional’s Guide to Saving Money and the Earth”** – This book, by Amy Spatrisano and Nancy J. Wilson, explains the business case for green meetings and events, understanding and applying environmental principles while improving cost-effectiveness.

- * **The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** offers a “Green Meetings” Web site to help you find the tips, tools and resources to make environmentally responsible choices. Visit www.epa.gov/opptintr/greenmeetings.



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.

