

# 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.

# Water Efficiency

Implementing a water-efficiency program is one of the most significant opportunities for hospitality facilities to lower operating costs.

Many water-saving recommendations are easy and affordable to implement and also may have large impacts on water usage. In addition to the obvious reduction in your water bill, savings also are realized through decreases in energy, wastewater and chemical costs. There's another benefit. Efficient water usage and other green

practices enhance the marketability of your facility as an environmentally friendly business.

### Conduct a water audit.

The first step is to conduct a water audit to determine current usage and identify opportunities to implement water-saving practices. There are resources to assist your facility. Audits may be arranged through a local utility. Some audits may be offered at no charge.

### You Should Know ...

Two key programs that can help hospitality facilities save money and protect the environment with water- and energy-efficient product recommendations are WaterSense and ENERGY STAR.

**WaterSense**, a partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), lists many products and services including faucets, showerheads, high-efficiency toilets and landscape irrigation. For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).

**ENERGY STAR**, a joint program of EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy, lists products in more than 60 categories including appliances, heating and cooling, water heaters, commercial food service and more. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) and click on products.



"A Water Conservation Guide for Commercial, Institutional and Industrial Users" is available at [www.ose.state.nm.us/water-info/conservation/pdf-manuals/cii-users-guide.pdf](http://www.ose.state.nm.us/water-info/conservation/pdf-manuals/cii-users-guide.pdf). This highly useful, comprehensive guide, developed by New Mexico's Office of the State Engineer, outlines a step-by-step process for conducting an audit and preparing a conservation plan. The American Water Works Association offers free software to make water audits quick and easy. To learn more, visit [www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org).

### Develop a water conservation plan.

The second step is to develop a plan to conserve water. In identifying activities to include, consider those that have the greatest potential to save water as well as those that are easy to implement and are most cost effective. The best plan is one that has been thoroughly developed, has management and staff support, and is widely promoted to staff, guests and the public. The plan should include areas of concern, specific action-based goals and regular tracking of water use.

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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](http://www.scdhec.gov/greenhospitality).

## There are many ways to conserve water.

Water conservation can be achieved through behavioral changes as well as operational and equipment practices. Listed below are a few basic recommendations.

### BEHAVIORAL

- ✿ **Remind guests and staff to use water only when needed.** This may seem like common sense, but large amounts of water are wasted during activities such as brushing teeth as well as washing hands and hair. Promote water conservation with signage in guest rooms and staff work areas as well as advertisements on your in-house television channel.
- ✿ **Implement an optional towel and linen reuse program in guest rooms.** These programs allow the facility to reduce water use and cost as well as have more efficient housekeeping. Signs promoting this program with instructions should be placed in each guest room.

### OPERATIONAL

- ✿ **Implement a “sweep-first” policy in all outdoor areas.** Do not use water for routinely cleaning patios and walkways. Sweeping can remove the majority of the debris leaving little reason for hosing off an area.
- ✿ **Irrigate during the morning hours.** The majority of water used during the afternoon will evaporate before it can reach the soil. Set timers on the irrigation system to run in the early morning. Clemson University Extension Service offers a guide, “Landscape Irrigation Management” at [www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/other/irrigation/](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/other/irrigation/).
- ✿ **Install soil moisture or rain detectors on landscape irrigation systems.** Using soil moisture meters or rain detectors allow the facility to water only when needed. Soil moisture meters sense the amount of moisture in the soil and will indicate when the moisture level reaches a certain threshold. Rain detectors will automatically shut off the irrigation system if it begins to rain.

- ✿ **Use South Carolina-friendly landscaping.** Use plants and grasses that are native to South Carolina and the Southeast. To learn more, visit [www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/other/landscaping/ec672\\_xeriscape.pdf](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/other/landscaping/ec672_xeriscape.pdf).

- ✿ **Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator.** Don't defrost in the sink under running water.

- ✿ **Scrape rather than rinse dishes before washing.** Consider on-site composting for your food scraps.

- ✿ **Wash only full loads of laundry and dishes.** Select the appropriate cycle on the washing machine and dishwasher.

- ✿ **Use pool cover to reduce evaporation when pool is not being used.** Lower water level to reduce the amount of water that is splashed out of the pool.

### EQUIPMENT

- ✿ **Use preventative maintenance schedules for water consuming equipment (e.g., ice machines, hot water heaters, dishwashers, washing machines).** Preventative maintenance can increase equipment efficiencies, lower costs and can lead to lower utility costs by correcting or preventing problems before they become larger issues.

- ✿ **Install waterless urinals.**

- ✿ **Use low-flow, pre-rinse nozzles in the kitchen and beverage areas.** Disable the ability to lock the nozzle in the open position. Pre-rinse nozzles are made to conserve water by automatically shutting off when not in use.

- ✿ **Replace old appliances with ENERGY STAR appliances that save water as well as energy.** The initial cost may be higher but the life-cycle costs are substantially lower. For more information, visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

- ✿ **Install low-flow fixtures in guest rooms, restrooms and staff shower areas.** Consider WaterSense products. For details, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).



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](http://www.scdhec.gov/greenhospitality).

