

Sustainable Practices For Conference Centers



www.tnsustainabletourism.com

Conference Centers do business with a wide range of customers – some are very environmentally-aware, while others are not as focused on the environment. But no matter what the group, there is an increasing interest among meeting planners nationally who care about the impact their meeting has on the destination where they hold their meeting. They are not only interested in the impact they leave, but they also want to know what sustainable practices the conference center has in place.

Luckily, there are many, many things that Conference Centers can do to minimize their impacts on the environment – many of them are simple, practical measures – and **almost all of them can save your facility money!!** Take a few minutes to go through the items on this list. Make sure you let your customers know about the good things you are already doing for the environment.

Sustainable Practices:

___ **Recycling.** Provide a plan for recycling at all events. Aluminum can and plastic bottle recycling are a great first step. The following additional items can be recycled: steel cans, cardboard, office paper, and composting of waste foods.

___ **Styrofoam & Disposable Reduction.** Minimize the use of all disposables and eliminate the use of Styrofoam-based products.

___ **Water Efficiency.** Have a plan for conserving and using water efficiently that considers water-saving faucets, showerheads, and toilets, leak detection, and an effective landscape watering plan.

___ **Energy Conservation.** Have a plan in place that encourages the replacement of lighting and equipment to energy-efficient alternatives such as compact-fluorescent lighting, LED Exit signs, lighting sensors, efficient heating and cooling, and *EnergyStar*/energy-efficient computers and other equipment.

___ **Green Events Package.** Offer a “green” or “environmentally-friendly” package for conferences, meetings, and other events. Provide recycling at such events and work with “environmentally-aware” customers on other techniques to reduce wastes. .

Recycling

- ♻ Glass
- ♻ Steel Cans
- ♻ Aluminum Cans
- ♻ Composting of excess food
- ♻ Grease Recycling
- ♻ Plastic
- ♻ Office Paper
- ♻ Toner cartridges
- ♻ Newspaper
- ♻ Cardboard
- ♻ Packing Supplies

- ♻️ Fluorescent Lamps
- ♻️ Batteries
- ♻️ Electronics equipment – computers, etc

Waste Reduction

- ♻️ Tracking overall waste bills
- ♻️ **Food & Conference Facilities**
- ♻️ Eliminate the use of Styrofoam
- ♻️ Use Dishware and Glassware & Minimize use of Disposables
- ♻️ Disposable containers made from:
 - ♻️ bio-based materials
 - ♻️ recycled content
 - ♻️ compostable material
- ♻️ Non-bleached napkins and coffee filters
- ♻️ Provide condiments and cream and sugar, etc, in bulk
- ♻️ Use of water pitchers that minimize use of single-use bottles
- ♻️ Donation of excess food from events
- ♻️ Effective food inventory control to minimize wastes
- ♻️ Purchase locally grown produce and other foods
- ♻️ Filtering of grease rather than recycling
- ♻️ Organic- and “sustainably-grown” foods (<http://www.sustainabletable.org/issues>)

Office/Purchasing

- ♻️ Purchase recycled-content paper-towels and toilet paper
- ♻️ Encouraging suppliers to minimize packaging and other waste materials
- ♻️ Purchasing from vendors and service providers with a commitment to the environment
- ♻️ 2-sided copies / printing
- ♻️ Use electronic correspondence and forms
- ♻️ Purchase recycled content paper / toilet tissue
- ♻️ Using “Green” Cleaners (www.greenseal.org) that are dispensed in bulk
- ♻️ Installation of high-efficiency hand-dryers (www.cleanlink.com/sm/article.asp?id=2387)
- ♻️ Purchase of durable equipment and furniture
- ♻️ Purchase “low-VOC” carpets and fabrics

Maintenance

- ♻️ Use of reused building materials or those from sustainable sources
- ♻️ Use of Latex Paint
- ♻️ Reuse of paint thinners
- ♻️ Proper recycling and/or disposal of thinners and solvents (required by EPA-RCRA)
- ♻️ Preventative maintenance of all appliances, HVAC systems, plumbing, and vehicles
- ♻️ Last-in/first-out inventory & effective labeling systems
- ♻️ Less toxic materials
- ♻️ Minimize use of pesticides and herbicides
- ♻️ Use “integrated pest management” (IPM) - www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/ipm.htm

Water

- ♻️ Tracking overall water usage and wastewater
- ♻️ Preventative maintenance of drips and leaks
- ♻️ Water-flow metering to discover leaks and areas of high use
- ♻️ High efficiency dishwashers
- ♻️ Discouraging water-based cleanup (sweep first)
- ♻️ Microfiber technology mops
- ♻️ Low flow restrictors on faucets and showerheads
- ♻️ Low flow toilets or Waterless urinals
- ♻️ Effective landscape management plan which utilizes drought tolerant species, metering and rain gauges, and minimizes lawn areas.
- ♻️ Rain gardens
- ♻️ Green roof development (www.greenroofs.com)

- ♻️ Cisterns and drip-line irrigation
- ♻️ Rain barrels (www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden/stormwater.htm)
- ♻️ Effective stormwater management
- ♻️ Minimization of impervious areas (paving, concrete, etc)
- ♻️ Vegetative buffers around streams and ponds

Energy

- ♻️ Tracking overall energy bills and set a numeric goal to reduce
- ♻️ Consider the pollution factor of your energy usage by using a pollution calculator, such as www.cleanerandgreener.org/resources/pollutioncalculator.htm
- ♻️ High efficiency compact fluorescent lightbulbs in all canned spotlights & in rooms
- ♻️ Install **LED Exit Signs** --
www.energystar.gov/ia/business/small_business/led_exitsigns_techsheets.pdf
- ♻️ High efficiency fluorescent ballasts and lamps (T-5's & T-8's)
- ♻️ Use of ceiling fans
- ♻️ High Efficiency Heating & Air Conditioning (HVAC)
- ♻️ Individual thermostats for each room
- ♻️ Use of natural lighting
- ♻️ Solar panels
- ♻️ Lighting sensors
- ♻️ Purchase of **EnergyStar** computers, appliances, etc. (www.energystar.gov)
- ♻️ Thermal-rated windows and insulation
- ♻️ Use of directional (downward-facing) lighting in parking areas and other outdoor areas
- ♻️ Design and operation of buildings that are “**LEED-certified**” (www.usgbc.org)

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Thank you for support and commitment toward sustainable tourism in Tennessee.

Source for Green checklist: Virginia Green <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/viriniagreen/>

www.tnsustainabletourism.com

