



2026

GO GREEN IDEAS

for Hotels and Resorts

In addition to **The Refinishing Touch®** providing sustainable solutions for your FF&E, here are additional sustainable ideas for every area of your hotel and resort. Eco hotels can keep up to date on green lodging news at Green Lodging News, Green Hotelier and Green Biz Tourism & Hospitality.

Staff

1. Create a '**green team**' at your hotel with the goal of continual improvement and scheduled re-evaluation and reporting.
2. Create an incentive program to encourage your staff to participate in and improve upon environmentally friendly practices.



3. Regardless of your hotel size, consider writing an Environmental, Social and Governance Report to help focus in on areas for improvement and as a format for communicating your green practices to your guests.
4. Get your building or operations certified through LEED (LEED operations and maintenance), Green Key Global, Green Seal, Green Globe, Travelife, EarthCheck or Audubon International Green Lodging. Trip Advisor's GreenLeader program can help promote your work. Additional certification programs: green hotel certification programs and a list of certifiers (Green Lodging News).
5. Provide yearly staff training on green practices throughout the buildings and grounds and post informational posters in break rooms and guest areas.

6. Educate your staff to:

- Turn off lights and turn down heating/air conditioning in unoccupied rooms or employee-only areas
- Continually check for and respond to leaking faucets and toilets



- Close/open drapes to reduce the need for heating/air conditioning
- Continually check for and power down unused hotel equipment (i.e., kitchen exhaust fans) that have been left running
- Report opportunities to reduce resource consumption
- Make sure all rooms have linen reuse cards for both towels and sheets

Water and Energy

1. Install a renewable energy system onsite (no cost options are available including, in the U.S., PACENation which provides low-cost, long-term financing for energy efficiency, water conservation and renewable energy projects) or switch to a certified renewable electricity provider.
2. Consider buying carbon offsets - TerraPass and Green-E have joined together to offer some good options. The Hotel Carbon Measurement Initiative can help with determining the carbon footprint for meetings, events and hotel stays. Other options for tracking emissions: Carbon Disclosure Project, WWF Climate Savers, The Climate Registry, and Energy Star Portfolio Manager.



3. Implement best practices no- or low-cost energy-efficiency measures by the EPA.
4. Start a linen (both towels and sheets) reuse program in all guest rooms. One example: Project Planet Program.
5. To reduce water use, consider using rainwater harvesting, greywater system, and/or air conditioner or refrigerant condensate for needs such as irrigation, toilet flushing, or fire suppression systems.
6. Switch to drought resistant native plants in garden areas and switch to WaterSense Landscape Irrigation Controllers. Replace mowed landscaping with native xeriscape ground cover (see also Native Gardening and Invasive Plants Guide).
7. Install low-flow showerheads (.5 to 2 gpm) and sink aerators (.25 gpm to .5 gpm for hand and face washing and 2.2 gpm for dish washing).
8. To reduce operational costs, water and energy consider installing an ozone laundry system.

9. Switch to low flow or dual flush toilets/urinals (1.28 GPF or less) or install toilet-tank fill diverters. Also, stay on top of leakage from the toilet flappers (the #1 source of leaks - a leaking or poorly fitting flapper can waste up to 200 gallons of water a day and may cost hundreds of dollars a year). Flappers typically start leaking within 1-2 years so schedule regular checks for leaks. Add a sign to your public bathrooms letting people know how to report leaks.



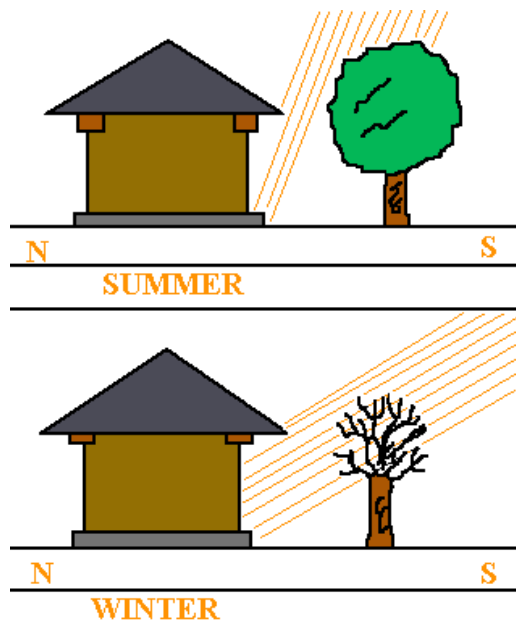
10. Switch to LED regular and tube lights in guest rooms, lobbies, and hallways.
11. Use daylighting/occupancy sensors and/or timers for as many office, common areas and exterior areas of your hotel as possible.
12. Install keycard master switches or occupancy sensors in guest rooms that control lights, electronics, blinds and temperature settings.
13. Consult outside sources to evaluate the total system when replacing major mechanical equipment (such as chiller, water tower, etc.). Often, this can lead to downsizing and other opportunities to reduce both the initial investment and operating costs.

14. Use an energy management system (EMS) to tie in air handling units, HVAC, and lighting to prevent conditioning space when it is not necessary.
15. Use daylight exclusively in your lobby, bar, and restaurant for as much of the day as possible. Consider installing Energy Star skylights if needed.



16. Switch to Energy Star heating and cooling systems to increase energy efficiency. Consider using heat pumps, geothermal technologies, waste heat recovery, cooling tower, and/or variable speed ventilation fans. Set the indoor cooling setpoint to 72° F or higher and heating setpoint to 72° F or lower and put limits on cooling and heating ranges throughout the building and guest rooms.
17. Replace exit signs with Energy Star exit signs (i.e., Light Emitting Diode (LED)).
18. Conduct an audit of equipment that uses "standby power" (the energy used while an appliance is switched off or not performing - a usage monitor can show standby watts) - plug equipment into bye bye standby or smart meters so that they are powered down completely when turned off.

19. Purchase Energy Star appliances and windows for all rooms (guest, back office, kitchen, laundry, etc.) wherever possible. Replace old washing machines with both water and energy conserving models.
20. Even with a damp, a lot of heat flows up chimneys in the winter. Check out the Chimney Sheep to save on heating and reduce uncomfortable drafts.
21. If vending machines are used, learn about opportunities to reduce energy use.
22. Install window film to lower heating and cooling loads and reduce glare in guest rooms.
23. Plant shade trees or add overhangs on south facing walls to reduce energy use for heating and cooling.



24. If the hotel has a pool and/or hot tub that requires heating, install a solar PV system and air-source heat pump or Energy Star water heating system and use solar pool covers and hot tub covers when the pool area is closed.
25. For roofs, use recommended levels of insulation or, in hot and sunny climates, radiant barriers. Learn about other options at energy.gov (also see Cool Roof Rating Council). Consider switching to a green roof.

26. Consider installing an electric car charging station for your hotel, restaurant and/or bar guests and get it listed on plug sharing maps such as plugshare.com. It's a great help for electric/plug-in hybrid car owners and helps to draw in business.
27. Make sure all waste-water is being properly treated either through an onsite or municipal sewage system.

Recycling and Waste

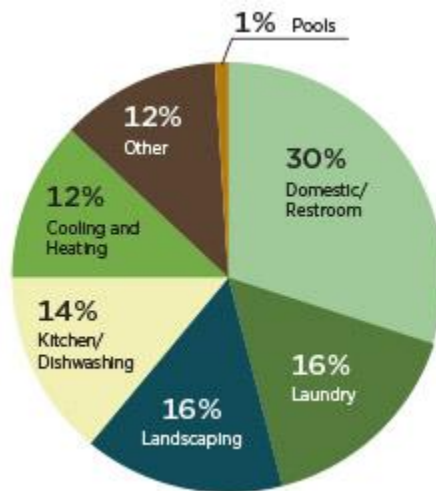
1. Provide guest room recycler baskets for newspaper, paper, glass, aluminum, cardboard, metal and plastic.
2. Provide recycling bins both in public areas (i.e., poolside), in the kitchen, and in the back office (including one at each desk) to make recycling as easy as possible.



3. Seek out ways to recycle or donate hard-to-recycle items (such as Styrofoam, packaging peanuts, planting pots, toiletries, bubble wrap, plastic bags, used mattresses, cooking oil (biodiesel), furniture, flooring) in your area and create a visible storage bin with signage to encourage employees and guests to throw these items into the separate bin.
4. Learn about local hazardous waste collection (i.e., paint, coating, printer cartridges, mercury CFL bulbs, electronics, batteries) and keep a separate bin to store these for drop off.

Building Maintenance

1. Include filter changes, refrigerator coil cleaning, thermostat calibration, water leak checks, and damper adjustments in your ongoing maintenance plan. At least quarterly, check that all building energy and water equipment are functioning properly.
2. Track energy, water and waste use monthly through an internal tracking system or through Energy Star Portfolio Manager (waste tracking feature). Make repairs or replace equipment when usage changes indicate problems. With waste, the best way to reduce it is to analyze several days worth of waste and look for specific ways to reduce it going forward.



3. If available, schedule an energy audit through your local energy provider - or through a local energy auditor (aka energy consultant).
4. Conduct or schedule a water audit.
5. If doing a building upgrade, consider starting with retro-commissioning.
6. For roofs, consider Cool Roofing or Green Roofing.

Food Services

1. If your hotel has a restaurant, consider transitioning it into a Certified Green Restaurant. Buy organic, locally-grown food and/or plant an organic

garden to provide fresh produce for your guests. Look for foods with the labels: USDA Certified Organic, Food Alliance Certified, Rainforest Alliance Certified, Protected Harvest Certified, and/or Fair Trade Certified. Offer vegan options.



2. Take steps to reduce food waste.
3. Try to avoid buying overharvested or endangered species fish using guides such as Seafood Watch. Look for the Marine Stewardship Council Blue Label for fish that are safe to eat.
4. Quick water and/or energy savers:
 - Check the flow rate of the pre-rinse spray valve. Switching to a valve using 1.6 gpm of water or less costs about \$75 and can save (in water, sewage, and gas bills) up to \$1050/year. Also, consider installing an on-off foot pedal and training the dish washer to turn off the spray valve when not in use.

- Insulate hot water pipes.



- If your hot food holding cabinet is not insulated, switching to an insulated Energy Star cabinet can result in a quick pay back.
 - Switching to an Energy Star Steam Cooker can also pay for itself quickly.
 - Train kitchen employees to turn off ventilation hoods when the cooking appliances are off.
 - Learn about other water and energy saving opportunities (and rebates) at Fishnick (Food Service Technology Center), Consortium for Energy Efficiency, Energy Star for Commercial Kitchens, ConSERVE, and WaterSense.
5. Donate leftover food to a local nonprofit organization and/or compost. Also compost yard waste and biodegradable products.
 6. Provide reusable items such as cloth napkins, glass cups, silver wear, ceramic dishes, etc. with all food and beverage services.
 7. Get listed in green restaurant guides such as eat well guide, Seafood Watch app, HappyCow, and VegGuide.

Garden

1. Consider planting a wildlife habitat on your property. Basic elements include fresh water (i.e., a bird bath and, if in a yard, water low to the ground); plants and feeders that provide nourishment for birds, insects, etc.; and rocks, trees, bushes and/or bird houses for shelter and nesting.
2. Purchase plants that are native to your area (aka. Nature-scape and Xeriscape).
3. Learn how to attract hummingbirds, butterflies and birds.
4. Consider creating an organic food garden for the kitchen. Short on space? Consider a Keyhole Garden or growing vegetables in containers.



5. If there's problems with storm runoff, consider adding a rain garden, planted swale, water detaining ponds, rainwater collection, and/or pervious pavement.
6. Consider adding a composting or worm composting bin to create important nutrients for your garden and an eco-friendly way to dispose of food waste.
7. Create an integrated pest management plan for non-toxic pest control.

Gift Shop

1. If your hotel has a gift shop, consider selling sustainable, fair trade products. (see also: WFTO Members).



Purchases

1. Create a green purchasing policy for cleaners, sanitizers, paints, pesticides, office supplies, etc. throughout the hotel. The U.S. EPA provides a Safer Choice guide for businesses and a guide for purchasing energy-saving products.
2. Choose low VOC paint, sealant, primers and adhesives.
3. Buy environmentally-friendly paper (copier paper, toilet paper, facial tissue, paper towels, etc.):
 - With high post-consumer recycled content
 - Made without the use of toxic chemicals such as chlorine or mercury
 - Certified by the Forest Stewardship Council or guaranteed to contain no fiber from endangered forests
 - Lightweight
4. Minimize the amount of paper used for each guest and in the office (i.e., reduce paper size of invoices, etc.). Print with soy-based inks.

5. Make sure your furniture can be refinished, is formaldehyde free, made with rapidly renewable materials, GreenGuard, FSC Certified, and/or locally produced.



6. Buy office and guest amenity products that contain recycled material.
7. If offering dry cleaning services, use nontoxic, biodegradable dry-cleaning solvent substitutes.
8. Buy nontoxic, biodegradable cleaning, laundry and dishwashing products with seals such as GreenGuard, Green Seal and Environmental Choice EcoLogo.
9. Buy flooring that is FloorScore Certified, CRI Green Label or Green Label Plus Certified, urea-formaldehyde free, recycled content, rapidly renewable materials, salvaged, GreenGuard, FSC Certified, and/or locally produced.
10. Buy organic, biodegradable, fair trade, locally-produced, cruelty-free guest amenity products (hair and body care, coffee and tea, etc.) with minimal (or recycled), plastic-free packaging whenever possible (Cruelty Free Companies and Fair-Trade Federation).

Guests and Guest Rooms

1. Stock a central library with local green guides, hiking and biking guides and information about the local environment and conservation efforts. Include a book swap section.
2. Provide your guests with bicycles, walking maps, and information on public transportation.
3. Offer discounted rates to sustainable living/environmental organizations who would like to stay at and/or hold meetings at your hotel.
4. Donate leftover guest amenities, old furniture and appliances to charities.
5. Donate used soap and shampoo to people in need through local shelters or organizations such as Clean the World.
6. Provide glass cups and ceramic mugs (instead of plastic) for in-room beverages. Place cups and mugs upside down on paper doilies (instead of covering opening with a plastic wrapping).
7. Whenever possible, buy food and guest amenities in bulk (i.e., use refillable hair and skin care dispensers).



8. Offer premier/free parking for green vehicles.



9. The greatest danger to birds is window collisions (up to 1 billion collisions annually in the U.S. alone). Audubon provides tips for minimizing collisions.
10. Consider offering your guests the ability to purchase carbon offsets for their trip (that are passed on to a certified offset company such as TerraPass).

Tell us about your upcoming renovation project! Call Jeanne Shannon at **(770)642-4169** to discuss your next hotel guestroom renovation project or email Jeanne@trt-us.com.

With over 49 Years of experience refinishing guestroom FF&E and completing over 9,000 hotel renovation projects, The Refinishing Touch is your sustainable and affordable solution expert! Learn more at www.therefinishingtouch.com

We Can Put More Green on Your Plate!



• Refinishing • Restoration • Re-Engineering • Solid Surfaces

Resources:

- Examples of [Green Hotels](#)
- [World Tourism Organization \(UN\)](#)
- [The Travel Foundation](#)
- [The Responsible Tourism Partnership](#)
- [Responsible Travel](#)
- [The International Institute For Peace Through Tourism](#)
- [Green Travel Market](#)