

The two main things that you can do to reduce your operating costs and greenhouse gas emissions from energy are:

1. Reduce your energy consumption
2. Switch to renewable energy sources

The first is easy to get started with and there are many things you can do that are no or low cost, yet very effective. The second might be more challenging depending on your circumstances, but is still achievable for most businesses. We have provided some ideas below to get you started.

### **QUICK FIXES**

These are all either low cost, no cost or low effort.

#### **General lighting**

- LED lights are always more efficient and better for the environment than halogen or fluorescent bulbs. As you replace light bulbs, source only LED options.
- Using different types and makes of lighting on the same circuit reduces efficiency and the life span of bulbs, so always use the same brand and technology on one circuit. Even using LED bulbs from different manufacturers can interfere with lighting efficiency.
- If you have vending machines, you might find they have unnecessary lights that can be turned off or removed. Depending on what model your machines are, these can draw a lot of power and emit heat that causes any refrigeration unit to work harder in order to keep food and drinks cool.

#### **General temperature control**

- Check your hot water temperatures to ensure they are at the correct setting for health and safety (e.g. prevention of legionnaires disease) yet not hotter than necessary.
- The majority of people find a room temperature of 20 degrees to be comfortable but this can vary by a few degrees depending on climate. Make sure that thermostats in central areas are set correctly and take measures to ensure doors and windows are kept closed to maintain the right temperature. Ask housekeeping to check this is the setting in guest rooms and consider putting a notice next to the control unit letting guests know that this is the most comfortable temperature.

#### **Equipment maintenance**

- Ensure that external air conditioning units and solar panels are regularly cleaned so that they are running efficiently. In big cities, dry climates or places that are especially dusty or sandy, you should be doing this often. Think about how quickly a car in your destination gets dirty and dusty. This gives you an indication of how quickly your external units and solar panels will be becoming less efficient and how often they will need cleaning.
- Add a regular check of solar panels for leaks to your maintenance schedule. They are often overlooked due to rooftop locations and can quickly become inefficient if not properly maintained.
- Ensure all equipment and machinery (fridges, air-conditioning units, lawn mowers, vacuum cleaners and so on) is regularly and properly serviced to ensure they are running optimally.

## Audit Story



A Travelife auditor once visited the roof of a large hotel to check the solar panels. Four out of 12 were not working. The general manager later discovered that they had been broken for six months but nobody had been on the roof during that whole time to check them. This had a serious impact on their energy bills that could have easily been avoided.

### Using equipment efficiently

- Walk through your entire property (including outdoor areas and a selection of guest rooms) and assess all of your lighting and equipment to see if it is needed, if it is needed during the day or during all seasons, if there is a better way to switch it off when not in use and if you can replace it with a more efficient option.
- Shut down computers when they are not in use. Older models in particular use a lot of energy so should be replaced with newer ones whenever possible, in the meantime you can help older ones run more efficiently by gently vacuuming the fan vents to remove dust build-up that causes the internal fans to run more than necessary.
- Train your staff to use equipment in the most efficient way possible. Consider things like the optimal load in a washing machine, the correct heat setting on a dryer, the best temperature setting in a fridge or the optimal power level of a vacuum cleaner.
- Spend some time looking for ways to reduce the amount of vehicle transfers taken. For example, have you given guests the option to reduce their carbon footprint by sharing an airport transfer with other guests arriving on the same flight rather than automatically providing several private ones? If your destination has a reliable and easy airport bus service, are you doing enough to promote this to guests as an option?

### Procurement

- When replacing equipment, always buy the most modern and efficient alternative.
- If your destination has more than one energy supplier, check to see if you can switch to one that uses more renewable energy and/or has made sound environmental commitments.
- Review the items that are being shipped to your property over long distances and check for options to source them locally or from a supplier with a lower environmental impact. For example, a supplier using rail freight may have a lower carbon footprint than one using road freight.

### Guest rooms

- If you have outdoor balcony or patio lights that guests can switch on and off, have housekeeping check that these are switched off during the day when they service the room.
- Are guest fridges turned on even when there is nothing in them? Could you keep them off and either have housekeeping turn them on before a guest checks in or put a small sign showing guests where to turn it on should they decide to use the fridge?
- If you are in a destination with high temperatures, be sure that guest fridges are not stocked with very warm drinks that may have been heated in the sun during storage or the restocking process. This causes fridges to use a lot of energy in order to cool the drinks, so see if there is a way to ensure they are at room temperature first.

- If fridges are in an enclosed space (e.g. a cupboard) without good air circulation, they will constantly use more energy to try to regulate the internal temperature. This will be expelled as hot air from the fridge's fan and interferes with the overall room temperature. Either move them out of such places or have holes drilled in the top and bottom of the enclosure to get more air circulating.
- Implement a towel and linen reuse programme and regularly check that housekeeping are following it.
- Consider only changing towels and sheets every four days during a guest's stay. If you are concerned about guest complaints, you can simply inform them that they can request fresh towels or a linen change whenever they wish.
- Consider whether you are putting more towels in guest rooms than are needed. If the maximum room occupancy is two, then put only that number of towels out and either let guests know that they can request more or put extra towels in a different place, such as a wardrobe, so it is easy for housekeeping to see they are unused and therefore do not need replacing.
- If you use key cards to activate power in guest rooms, you may have ones that a guest can override by putting any type of card in the slot. This means they can still leave on lights and air conditioning when they are not in the room. It might help if you only give one key card per room, only offering a second one on request and put a note next to the key card slot reminding guests of the importance of turning things off when they leave the room.
- Put small signs next to air-conditioning/heating control units that remind people to turn off the unit when doors or windows are open. You could use a graphic rather than words to save you translating this into multiple languages. Alternatively, you could install sensors on the doors and windows that automatically turn off air conditioning when they are open.
- Put information in rooms reminding guests about ways to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by saving energy during their stay.

### **Central guest facilities**

- Ensure that staff are trained to backwash pool filters for the correct amount of time. It is common to find that backwashing is running for much longer than necessary and this has a high energy impact.
- Does your heated swimming pool need to be heated all year? Can it be set to a lower temperature?
- Our auditors often find that saunas and steam rooms are running all day and into the evening, even though they are rarely being used. Consider turning them off outside peak times and/or reducing the temperature.
- Are you leaving a jacuzzi running when nobody is using it? You could turn it off during off-peak times or simply ensure guests can turn it on and off themselves, then train staff to regularly check it is turned off when not in use.
- Do you leave televisions running all day in the gym? Consider switching them off outside peak periods and putting up a sign telling guests to call the front desk if they want a staff member to switch it on.

- Are guests using more towels than necessary in the spa, gym or the pool? If these areas are staffed it might be possible to issue individual towels or to remind guests via signage about the environmental impacts.

### **Kitchens**

- Ensure that fridges in your kitchens are regularly cleaned and defrosted. They should be clear through to the fan coil in order to be operating efficiently. Ice build-up can lead to a lot of unnecessary energy consumption.
- Instruct kitchen staff on the importance of always closing fridge and freezer doors. This is a very common problem and can have a major impact on energy consumption.
- Regularly check the condition of plastic strip curtains in kitchens and quickly make any necessary repairs or replacements.
- Avoid putting hot food and liquids into fridges or freezers. This has a drastic impact on the energy the equipment consumes in order to regulate the temperature. It is better to get food and liquids close to room temperature first but always make sure you are not compromising health and safety guidelines.

### **Staff areas**

- Put signs or stickers in staff areas reminding them to switch off lights and equipment when not in use.

## **MODERATE COST AND EFFORT**

### **Lighting**

- Replace all lighting with LED options using the lowest possible wattage. This can be done gradually but keep in mind that in order to comply with the Travelife standard at least 50% of lighting in guest areas must be energy efficient before your second audit.
- Replace decorative outdoor lighting with solar powered options, leaving electric lighting for emergency lights and those required to stay on all night for health and safety reasons. In some areas you may be able to use motion sensors to guide people at night, rather than leaving lights on all the time.

### **Timers and sensors**

- Using timers and sensors to control lighting, air conditioning and equipment is an investment that will pay off over time in lower energy bills. You can start in back-of-house and central areas before investing in technology for guest rooms.
- If you decide to install or replace an automatic key card activation system for guest room electricity, choose a system that is linked electronically to the unique room key. This will prevent guests from using other types of cards to override the system and thus leave the power on when they are not in the room.

### **General maintenance**

- Ensure that all internal and external pipes (both hot and cold) are properly insulated to prevent energy loss.
- Insulate outdoor pipes that are exposed to sunlight with a material that is either white or reflective. This will prevent energy loss and lengthen the lifespan of the pipe.

- Bird droppings can reduce the efficiency of solar panels so install anti-bird spikes or a similar solution that prevents birds from perching on or above panels.

### **Central guest facilities**

- Review the use of pumps and air jets to create bubbles and other types of water movement in jacuzzis and swimming pools. These can use a lot of energy and may not need to be on all the time. Consider installing buttons so that guests and/or staff can easily turn these features on and off as required.
- Consider using a liquid pool cover that not only reduces the loss of heat and water, but can also reduce the depletion of pool cleaning chemicals.

### **HIGHER INVESTMENT WITH LONG-TERM REWARDS**

- Install technology such as motion sensors and/or timers in guest rooms, central areas, outdoors and in your grounds to ensure that lighting and equipment is only used when needed. Do thorough research when sourcing the best solutions for your property to ensure you are using the most efficient technology that will have the highest impact for the longest amount of time. Motion sensors generally work better than key cards to control energy use in guest rooms.
- Replace older equipment with the latest most energy efficient technology and develop a plan and budget to continue doing this indefinitely. This applies to large equipment like air-conditioning units and restaurant fridges through to small items like kettles and coffee makers, but you should prioritise equipment that draws the most power or emits the most pollutants.
- Install air curtains over entrances and large windows that are continually open to the outside in hot weather; this will trap cold air inside resulting in lower energy costs from regulating the room temperature.
- Consider installing solar panels and other renewable energy solutions that best suit your property.
- Spend time with architects and engineers to fully assess energy efficiency in new builds and refurbishments so that you can reap significant environmental and cost savings. For example, using the latest insulation in walls and ceilings could greatly reduce ongoing operating costs and carbon emissions.