

The three main things that you can do to improve the environmental impacts of your water management:

1. Reducing the amount of water your business consumes
2. Reducing the amount of harmful substances in your waste water (this is covered under Hazardous Substances)
3. Responsibly managing your waste water

There are many things you can do that are no or low cost, yet very effective. We have provided some ideas below to get you started.

QUICK FIXES

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

Guest rooms

- 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.
- Add regular checks for leaking toilets to the housekeeping checklist and implement a system to ensure these are promptly reported to maintenance.
- Put communications in guest rooms reminding them of how to save water.

Warning!

Towel & Linen Reuse Programmes



One of the most common issues we find is that hotels are not following their own reuse programme. Washing items unnecessarily is not only a waste of money and staff time, it also has a significant environmental impact from the consumption of energy, water and chemicals used in laundries. Sometimes senior management do not know that the policy has not been followed until a Travelife auditor alerts them.

We encourage all Travelife Members to implement and regularly check procedures that ensure that a guest's wishes to have their items reused is respected, and that clean items are not being washed.

Central guest areas

- 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.
- If you provide a hose to rinse salt off scuba diving equipment or other items used in marine activities, consider instead providing a tank to dip the items into that is refilled as required. This will still remove salt from equipment and save a significant amount of water.
- If you provide a sauna or steam room, assess when it is being used. You might be able to turn it off more often or reduce 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 themselves.
- Frequently check pools for leaks, especially in drainage channels that can become blocked with debris and overflow.
- Assess the swimming pool water level. If it is too low then the water cannot be cleaned properly, if it is too high you may be losing water over the edges.

Irrigation

- Turn off irrigation when it rains and only turn it back on when the plants need water again.
- Make sure any irrigation is going directly on to plants and not on to concrete or paving.
- Irrigate when it is dark.
- Bury irrigation pipes under a few centimetres of soil, mulch or similar, then have a schedule for regularly checking them for leaks and blockages.
- Regularly check hoses and irrigation pipes for leaks. Poorly fitted hose connectors and corroded washers can also waste a lot of water.
- Spend some time researching exactly how much water your plants need. You can do this with internet searches and many people find that plants need a lot less water than they think.
- Train ground staff on how to identify signs of overwatering and how to take corrective action.

General

- Ensure all equipment and machinery (fridges, air-conditioning units and so on) is regularly and properly serviced to ensure they are running optimally and when replacing equipment, always buy the most modern and efficient alternative.
- Train your staff to use equipment in the most efficient way possible. Consider things like the optimal load in a washing machine or dishwasher.

- If your destination has more than one water supplier, check to see if you can switch to one that takes water conservation seriously.
- Remind staff to always turn off taps if they will not be in use for more than a few seconds. Common examples are leaving hoses running while cleaning vehicles, leaving a tap running when cleaning a kitchen area or whilst washing hands.
- Put signs or stickers in kitchens and staff bathrooms reminding them to save water and asking them to report any leaks they find.
- Display a clear backwash procedure for cleaning swimming pool filters and make sure all relevant staff members are trained to ensure that filters are cleaned only when required and in an efficient manner. Ensuring that the backwash process is correct is a Travelife requirement.
- Our auditors regularly find leaks in areas that go unnoticed for extended periods due to the difficult or hidden location of pipes. Consider adding a regular check of places such as underneath bathroom sinks, inside service ducts and cupboards. Leaks not only waste water but can create more serious damage if left unchecked that leads to costly repairs and guest complaints.

Audit Story



A Travelife hotel in Dominican Republic was having a serious long-term issue with mosquitos in guest rooms. They tried various measures to control it with no success and guests were frequently complaining. During a Travelife audit, an auditor discovered a leak inside a small service duct in the ceiling of one guest room. The water had pooled to create a breeding area for mosquitos that were travelling through ducts into other guest rooms. As soon as the leak was fixed the mosquitos disappeared for good!

MODERATE COST AND EFFORT

- 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.
- Install aerators and flow restrictors in all bathrooms to reduce water flow. It is important that you have both a procedure and budget for regularly checking and replacing these as they do corrode over time. Remember that from your second audit onwards, the Travelife Standard requires that your water flow is less than 10 litres per minute in showers, 5 litres per minute in basins, 6.5 litres per toilet flush and 2 litres per urinal flush.
- Installing water meters on things like irrigation systems and swimming pools is a reliable and cost-effective way to check for leaks. If you regularly record the readings and suddenly notice an increase, it is highly likely that you have a leak and can fix it quickly, thus preventing water waste and potentially a more costly repair.

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 water-consuming 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.

- Replace older equipment with the latest most water-efficient technology and develop a plan and budget to continue doing this indefinitely.
- Research options for reusing waste water, including any relevant legislation and permits you might require. This could include simple solutions like collecting rainwater in tanks and using it to wash vehicles or to water plants, or complex solutions that will pay off over time such as installing a permanent grey water recycling system.
- Spend time with architects and engineers fully assessing resource efficiency in new builds and refurbishments so that you can reap significant environmental and cost savings. For example, it will take longer for hot water to reach bathrooms that are a long way from a water heating source. This wastes water as guests run the tap or shower whilst waiting for hot water to come through.