

The two main things that you can do to reduce your negative impacts of waste are:

- Reduce your waste consumption.
- Ensure that all waste is either reused, recycled or safely disposed of.

We have provided some ideas below to get you started.

### QUICK FIXES

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

#### Food waste

- Are you regularly throwing away complimentary food that you provide to guests in their rooms or central areas? This could mean that guests do not value this service so consider eliminating this practice in favour of other sustainable ways to make them feel valued and welcomed.
- Talk to your chef about using leftover food to make stocks and sauces.
- Monitor food that comes back untouched from guest plates. For example, if the majority of your guests are not eating a salad garnish then you could eliminate that from a dish and, if necessary, find an attractive way to display the food that does get eaten.
- Review your portion sizes on plated dishes and volumes on buffets. If you are regularly throwing away uneaten food then simply cutting back on volume can have a big impact. You can find other ways to make a buffet look impressive through use of decoration.
- Composting your own food waste for use as a fertilizer on your own gardens is a great way to reuse waste. If you are unable to do this then find out if there are farmers or other organisations in your community that will collect leftover food for animal feed or compost.
- Consider ordering foods that you use in high volume in bulk to reduce packaging but at the same time, check that you are not throwing away unused food because you are ordering it in bulk but not using it quickly enough.
- Before eliminating plastics from your kitchen or stores, research the possible benefits they have on food waste. For example, a plastic-wrapped cucumber lasts significantly longer than an unwrapped one.
- Implement a system that ensures your food stores are rotated so that the oldest food gets used first and regularly check that staff are following the system.
- Review your options for sourcing food locally instead of using suppliers in other towns/cities so that you can purchase products as you need them rather than ordering things 'just in case'. Any cost increase will almost certainly be offset by reducing the amount of food you purchase that is wasted. Remember that there is a cost involved in disposing of waste too.

- Regularly check the temperature and general condition of fridges, freezers and storerooms to make sure conditions are optimal to maintain the shelf life of food.
- Instruct kitchen staff on the importance of always closing fridge and freezer doors. This is a very common problem and can cause food items to spoil more quickly.

### **Plastic waste**

- Conduct a plastics assessment throughout your property to look for easy and quick ways to reduce, reuse or eliminate plastics.
- Serve drinks without plastic straws or stirrers and have a sustainable alternative such as paper straws or wooden stirrers available for guests that request them.
- Ask the suppliers of things like bathrobes and slippers to stop using plastic wrapping.
- Replace plastic laundry bags with washable fabric bags that can be reused.
- Review your consumable guest room amenities (soaps, shampoos, pens etc.) and eliminate ones that guests do not use very often, instead having them available on request. For example, do your guests really need cotton buds or plastic shoe horns? For items that guests do appreciate, look for sustainable alternatives that do not use plastic and/or are easy to recycle. For example, soap that is wrapped in sustainably sourced paper instead of plastic or replacing plastic pens with sustainably produced pencils.
- Stop using plastic hygiene strips on guest toilets.
- Eliminate plastic wrapping or covers from glasses and cups in guest rooms. If you are worried that a guest will complain, have a small stock available for housekeeping to use only for a guest that has complained.
- If you use plastic bin liners, consider tipping their contents into a larger bag and reusing them until they are soiled or damaged. In some areas you may be able to eliminate them and simply wipe out bins instead.
- Reuse plastic cleaning product containers to create no-cost spill trays for your chemicals. First you need to make sure that the container did not contain any harmful substances, is clean, is made of a plastic that is robust enough to handle a spill and has enough volume to contain a spill. Then you can cut the container in half lengthways or cut the top off to make a spill tray big enough for a smaller chemical container.
- Consider if there are ways to reduce the plastic key cards you consume. You could encourage guests to hand them in and ask them if they need more than one card instead of automatically issuing two.

### **Paper and cardboard waste**

- Stop using hygiene strips on guest toilets.

- Eliminate paper or card covers from glasses and cups in guest rooms. If you are worried that a guest will complain, have a small stock available for housekeeping to use only for a guest that has complained.
- Consider asking guests if they want a coaster or napkin with their drink instead of offering them automatically.
- Set your computers and printers to print double-sided and in black and white by default. This can save a lot of paper and ink toner.
- Before you print the final bill for a guest, ask if they would prefer you to e-mail it to them.
- Stop putting guest bills into envelopes or folders. If you think this is an important part of your service, considering asking guests if they would like one first.
- Consider if there are ways to reduce the amount of key card holders you use or at least making sure they are recycled by encouraging guests to hand them back in.
- Provide guest feedback surveys online and let guests know this is an option. This should reduce the amount of paper or card surveys you have to produce.
- Review the printed sales and marketing materials you produce. There is a good chance you will find that you are throwing away more unused materials than in previous years as people move to using websites, apps, videos, e-brochures and PowerPoint presentations to promote their business. This is particularly true if you are promoting to the travel industry at things like trade shows. Consider including information on where and how to view your materials on a business card or a smaller flyer.
- Assess if guests are finding the printed materials you put in rooms (magazines, newspapers, TV guides) useful. If housekeeping report that these are usually untouched, then consider eliminating them and instead leaving a small card saying that these are available on request.
- If you are providing all guests with a complimentary newspaper each morning then stop! Many people now get their news online. Have reception ask guests on check-in if they would like a complimentary newspaper and ensure night staff have information about which rooms have requested this.

### **General procurement**

- Using different types and makes of lighting on the same circuit reduces the life span of bulbs, so always purchase the same brand and technology.
- Buy recycled ground glass for pool filters instead of sand.
- Verify that any waste collection suppliers are disposing of your waste in a sustainable manner. If not, you might be able to change to a different supplier or pressure your existing one to improve their performance.
- Ask your suppliers to reduce, reuse or eliminate packaging. If that is not possible then ask them to find more sustainable alternatives, e.g. using recycled shredded paper to protect

fragile items instead of polystyrene. You might be able to return the shredded paper to them so they can reuse it.

- Dedicate some time to checking that products that claim they are environmentally friendly or biodegradable definitely are. For example, some plastics claim to be biodegradable yet still take decades to degrade, do not degrade in marine environments and/or release toxic chemicals during the process.

## General

- Is there any waste that a local art group, community group, charity or school could use? There are numerous ideas to explore here that also help with your community engagement efforts:
  - A homeless charity or women's shelter might appreciate guest bathroom amenities or good quality leftover food.
  - A hospital or care home might like to have magazines and books that guests have left behind.
  - A local school or college might be able to use things like menus and brochures for tourism and hospitality courses.
  - An animal shelter might appreciate clean blankets, towels or bathrobes that you are replacing.
  - Discussions with local artists and art teachers could lead to many unique ideas. For example, we know of one hotel that had chandeliers made from wine bottles and another that had their Christmas tree made from water bottles.
- Can you use any of your waste for guest activities such as a children's programme? For example, plastic bottle tops can make good paint containers and there are numerous art and craft activities for children that could use old magazines, newspapers, cardboard boxes, egg cartons and old brochures.
- Your staff are a great resource to help you find sustainability solutions so ask them for help. For example, a staff member might know of a school or kindergarten that will collect your used egg cartons or plastic bottle tops for artwork. Initiatives like this are a great way to engage your staff, support your community and to reduce your environmental impact.
- Put information in guest rooms reminding them about ways to help reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by reducing waste during their stay.
- Put information in staff areas about the importance of reducing and properly disposing of waste.
- Frequently check bins to ensure that your staff are properly disposing of waste. If they are, be sure that praise is given. If they are not, add training or signage as necessary.
- Make sure that recycling bins have clear signs so that it is easy for anyone to understand how to separate their waste. Graphics work much better than text but if you do go for text, make sure it is available in the main languages of your guests.
- Assess what guests are putting in your rubbish bins. You may find that most items are bottles, cans, food or paper-based waste, all of which can be recycled. Adding more recycling

bins will make it easy for guests to recycle, perhaps you could re-designate some of your general waste bins as recycling bins.

- Some bars give guests the bottle and/or can with a glass when they serve a drink, so that the guest can pour it themselves. Consider ending this practice in places where guests might take the can or bottle away with them and not dispose of it properly.
- How can you help your guests to dispose of waste properly when they check out? If you check with your housekeeping staff you may find that many guests leave behind things like sunscreen, shampoos, shopping bags and packaging from shopping. Consider if there are better ways for you to ensure these things are reused or recycled.
- Proper use can increase the life span of equipment. 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.
- Batteries are extremely harmful to the environment if not disposed of properly and often guests will throw them into general waste so that our Members do not realise the extent of the problem, or have an opportunity to fix it. Find out if there is a sustainable disposal method for them in your destination and if possible, encourage guests and staff to hand in used batteries so you can ensure they are disposed of correctly.

#### **MODERATE COST AND EFFORT**

- Replace individual bathroom amenities such as soap and shampoo with dispensers that can be refilled from a bulk supply. This will reduce plastic waste and operating costs.
- Growing your own herbs, vegetables or fruit has many benefits:
  - Providing you adjust menus according to when items can be harvested, you can reduce spoiled food and increase the freshness of dishes by picking what you need each day.
  - You can use compost from your own food waste as fertiliser.
  - You can engage guests with things like seasonal cooking classes, featuring seasonal dishes from your own gardens or educating them about herbs, fruit and vegetables that are of special significance to your destination.
  - You can engage your community by donating unused produce or teaming up with local schools or charities to offer training programmes about growing food, gardening and how to reduce food waste.
  - Growing plants that are native to your region will support biodiversity and important wildlife such as bees, butterflies and birds.
  - If you are unable to grow your own garden you could partner up with a community group or other businesses to create a shared facility.

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

- Consider moving any chemical, fuel or waste storage structures so they are well away from natural resources in the event of a leak or spill. Even a small amount of a toxic chemical leaked into the ocean or a stream can have a serious and lasting impact on water quality, plants and wildlife, potentially harming humans too. Build any new structures to be robust, to have adequate ventilation, to keep out wildlife and to safely contain leaks and spills according to the latest standards.

- Using salt to keep pool water clean is an excellent solution for smaller pools and prevents the production of more harmful waste from pool chemicals.