



ACCOMMODATION

SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE

This good practice guide has been developed specifically for businesses in the accommodation sector, including holiday parks, hostels, bed and breakfasts, motels, hotels and lodges. It provides targeted and practical ideas for business sustainability. Further information, tools, and similar guides are contained in the Ministry of Tourism website: www.tourism.govt.nz/sustainability



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- Assess current energy use to find consumption patterns and the most likely places for efficiency improvements (e.g. conduct an energy audit).
- Continue to monitor energy consumption (e.g. daily, weekly or monthly, to identify any abnormal consumption and quantify energy savings); consult your energy suppliers for advice.
- Work with employees to identify and implement energy-saving practices (e.g. resetting heating, air conditioning, refrigerators to fixed temperatures when cleaning rooms, not leaving equipment on standby).
- Install energy efficient lighting and hot water systems (e.g. compact fluorescent bulbs, on-demand gas water heating, heat exchange units).
- Give guests the option to not have their bed linen and towels changed daily, and provide unheated towel rails.
- Use products that require less energy to maintain (e.g. coloured linen, cotton products that can be laundered at lower temperatures than whites).
- Install a key card system so that power is only used when guests are in rooms (e.g. equipment turns off when key card is removed).
- Give guests the options of cold water wash and drying clothes on outside lines.
- Use sensors and timers to turn off heating and lighting in areas occupied intermittently.
- Regularly clean, monitor and service all energy-consuming equipment, to ensure it is running as efficiently as possible (e.g. refrigerators, heating and air-conditioning systems, dryers, pumps, fans).
- Insulate all pipes, ducts, wall and roof spaces, and weather strip or seal around doors and windows to reduce heat loss / gain.



WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

- Recover grey-water from laundry processes, and re-use it for garden irrigation or toilet flushing, or divert it for use in pre-wash laundry cycles.
- Use biodegradable detergents and cleaning agents that are compatible with the wastewater treatment technologies servicing the site.
- Collect potentially hazardous liquid wastes (such as disused chemicals, waste oil and grease), for separate processing as special wastes.
- Regularly check and maintain on-site septic tank systems (at least every two years), and confirm with your council whether any specific local requirements apply.
- Install oil/water separators in stormwater catchpits that service paved car parking areas.
- Label stormwater grates and cesspits 'tip no wastes – drains to sea' or paint fish symbols (stencils are available from some regional councils).
- Where on-site vehicle washing facilities are available to guests, ensure these provide for adequate treatment of wash water, and are approved by the local council (or encourage guests to use local commercial facilities).
- Establish a designated dump station, for the safe disposal of toilet and grey water by Motorhome users. Seek inclusion in the Guide to Dump Stations in New Zealand.

Establish local community waste initiatives (community composting or recycling facilities).



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ACCOMMODATION

CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVATION

- Choose native plants that require less water, pesticides, fertilisers and herbicides when landscaping.
- Set aside land as a private reserve to ensure biodiversity and attract NZ native insect-eating birds (e.g. fantail, grey warbler, silver eye, shining cuckoo), and include signage to identify and describe native vegetation.
- Work with other tourism businesses, councils and community groups, to implement a local 'Trees for Travellers' sponsorship initiative (e.g. native tree planting by tourists to mitigate CO₂ emissions).
- Educate guests as to how they can make a positive contribution to local biodiversity conservation efforts (e.g. include information in compendium / notice boards on conservation efforts, volunteering and sponsorship opportunities).
- Implement team-building days, volunteering on a local conservation project.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Identify the main areas in your business where significant water savings could be achieved (e.g. conduct a water audit); ask your water supplier or plumber for advice.
- Monitor water consumption for each area of the business (e.g. kitchen, laundry, rooms, swimming pool, gardens etc) to identify any abnormal consumption and check for leaks (e.g. regularly inspect taps, toilets, valves and pipework, check meters at night to identify leaks).
- Encourage employees to adopt water-saving practices (e.g. don't leave water running when cleaning, operate washing machines and dishwashers only when full, use dishwasher eco cycle).
- Encourage guests to save water (e.g. put signage in rooms and public areas, with tips such as turning taps off when shaving or brushing teeth).
- Install simple, low cost water saving devices (e.g. weights in toilet cisterns, flow restrictors in water pipes, automatic shut-off spray nozzles on hoses, plugs in sinks).
- Install water saving devices when upgrading (dual flush toilets, low-flow shower heads and taps, infrared or waterless urinals, self-closing taps).
- Apply mulch to gardens to retain moisture, add nutrients and discourage weed growth (e.g. shredded leaves, newspaper, wood chips, grass clippings, straw, bark chips, saw dust).
- Water gardens at a cool time of day to minimise evaporation, and use timers or rain sensors.
- Install a rainwater collection system, to collect roof water from buildings in tanks (e.g. use for irrigation and/or cleaning).

CHEMICALS AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

- Display Material Safety Data Sheet information (detailing supplier information on health, safety and environmental precautions to be followed), where chemicals are used, and train staff in handling and disposal requirements.
- Reduce contaminants by using natural products such as citrus, salt, vinegar and baking soda to clean ovens, drains, windows and floors.
- Use automatic dosing for chemicals for cleaning and pool water treatment, to ensure safe handling, and that the correct amounts of chemicals are used for each task.
- Regularly check and maintain air conditioners, heat pumps, refrigerators, freezers and kitchen cooling equipment to detect and eliminate leakage of ozone-depleting CFC and HCFC gases.
- Convert existing equipment to utilise low-Ozone Depleting Potential (ODP) or zero-ODP chemicals (e.g. replace parts, change lubricating oils; on advice from refrigeration engineers).

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

- Review all products and services that you purchase, and advise your suppliers that you will give preference to products that meet social and environmental criteria (e.g. based on distance from origin, biodegradability, efficiency rating, recycled content, ability to be recycled etc).
- Partner with other local accommodation providers, to establish collaborative purchasing of products in bulk, and with less packaging.
- Consider 'whole of life cost' in future product sourcing decisions (e.g. whether products can be recycled, sold or donated after use – look for supplier 'take back' schemes for carpet, mobiles, appliances, office equipment).
- Use biodegradable and environmentally certified (e.g. Environmental Choice) cleaning agents, paints, solvents and other products.
- When purchasing new appliances and plumbing fittings, select energy efficient (e.g. EnergyStar or Energy Rated) and water efficient products (e.g. AAAAA or star water conservation rated).
- Create written contracts when contractors are employed for cleaning and maintenance activities that involve the use of hazardous substances (e.g. cover health, safety, environmental precautions to be followed, chemical selection, handling, storage and disposal).

Offer rarely used items (such as sewing and shoe cleaning kits), as well as newspapers, to guests by request only.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Owner/operators and staff should programme in holidays at least annually to enhance personal well-being.
- Implement a health and safety programme for all staff, using templates developed by industry associations (e.g. induction and training, safety discussions, injury accident and investigation).
- Develop an Emergency Evacuation Plan (e.g. using templates developed by industry associations) and ensure information is communicated to staff and guests (e.g. through laminated signage within all accommodation).
- Enforce requirements that all cleaning and maintenance staff use appropriate protective equipment (e.g. wear gloves when cleaning).
- Join the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Workplace Safety Management Practices Programme. This attracts reduced premiums upon demonstrating that the business health and safety management systems meet the graded requirements.



CELEBRATE SUCCESS

- Include sustainability successes in marketing collateral (e.g. website, brochures, sales calls).
- Submit an Expression of Interest to the Tourism Industry Association for the New Zealand Tourism Industry Awards.
- Share and build on sustainability successes through existing channels (e.g. relevant industry associations, business networks).
- Hold celebratory events for staff, and encourage other local businesses to participate.



SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

- When building or renovating, use sustainable materials (e.g. recycled or recyclable, sourced locally, long lasting, non-toxic, from a renewable resource).
- Seek professional assistance to ensure energy efficiency is maximised in any new builds or refurbishments, including:
 - maximising insulation and use of passive solar (for heating, cooling)
 - identifying most efficient room heating and cooling options (e.g. central, underfloor heating, heat pumps, night stores, ceiling fans and renewable energy sources)
 - determining most efficient lighting options (e.g. compact fluorescent lamps, solar tubes, skylights)
 - using thermal mass principles in any new builds (e.g. heavy concrete floors, walls).



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- Keep the community informed of initiatives and seek involvement and support (e.g. open days, native planting projects).
- Employ local staff, and offer internships or tourism work-experience.
- Develop training programs covering both basic skills and those necessary for promotion, so that local people can be phased into management positions over time.
- Give priority to locally produced goods and services from medium, small and micro-enterprises (e.g. organic produce for breakfasts).
- Donate old, partially used or unused products to charitable causes (e.g. soap, toiletries, lotions, amenity kits, old towels, linen, furniture, kitchenware and office equipment that is still functional).
- Encourage guests to purchase local products and services (e.g. include details in compendiums, establish collaborative trading arrangements / guest offers with other local businesses).
- Establish local community waste initiatives (community composting or recycling facilities).

Use automatic dosing for chemicals for cleaning and pool water treatment, to ensure safe handling, and that the correct amounts of chemicals are used for each task.



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

- Develop an Action Plan, setting out ways to enhance sustainability performance; make someone responsible for each action and impose a deadline; review to ensure deadlines are met.
- Integrate sustainability into existing management systems and processes (e.g. include as an agenda item in meetings, build into business plans).
- Seek to become a carbon neutral certified business, reduce CO₂ emissions as much as possible, and offset those that remain (e.g. by funding native tree planting or energy-efficient schemes to compensate for carbon released from business operations).
- Implement a formal guest feedback process which includes sustainability performance as an area for comment; introduce guest rewards for good ideas (e.g. vouchers).
- Become Qualmark® endorsed, using this guide to assist in meeting the requirements for environmental accreditation.
- Consult a business mentor, to identify ways to operate more efficiently (free up time), develop and grow the business (e.g. NZTE programmes).



MINIMISING WASTE

- List all the wastes generated by the business (e.g. wastes that could end up in landfill), and think of ways to avoid sending them to landfill.
- Choose from the following waste management options for each waste stream: Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Compost. Regularly check on progress and costs (e.g. conduct simple waste audits).
- Use single serve dispensers, instead of single-use disposable hair products and soaps in guest rooms.
- Replace plastic laundry bags in guest rooms with reusable cloth bags.
- Offer rarely used items (such as sewing and shoe cleaning kits), as well as newspapers, to guests by request only.
- Reduce the use of office consumables (e.g. print double sided, reuse paper, keep electronic copies instead of paper, purchase refillable pencils, pens, and cartridges).
- Establish a compost bin or worm farm (or outsource for collection by another agency), so that organic wastes (such as food scraps, tea leaves and tree cuttings) can be converted into fertiliser to use on site.
- Provide labelled recycling containers in guest rooms, and designated recycling stations on site.
- Safely segregate hazardous solid wastes (e.g. fluorescent light tubes and capacitors, chemical containers, batteries), and find schemes for the safe handling and disposal of these wastes; ask your council for advice.
- Lobby council to support your waste management efforts (e.g. supplying kerbside recycling and collection of 'difficult' wastes).

Install simple, low cost water saving devices (e.g. weights in toilet cisterns, flow restrictors in water pipes, automatic shut-off spray nozzles on hoses, plugs in sinks).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

- UNEP 2003, A Practical Guide to Good Practice: Managing Environmental and Social Issues in the Accommodations Sector, www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/library
- International Tourism Partnership 2007, Going Green: Minimum Standards toward a Sustainable Hotel, www.tourismpartnership.org
- Queensland EPA 2001, Guideline on Environmental Management Planning for Caravan Parks, www.epa.qld.gov.au/publications
- For details of industry sustainability initiatives and sources of help, refer to the Ministry for Tourism website, www.tourism.govt.nz/sustainability/



REDUCING SWIMMING POOL WASTE

- Check pump and filter daily, and do preventative maintenance to maximise efficiency.
- Install a time clock or automated pump system on the filter pump to reduce energy costs.
- Don't heat the pool above 25.5°C; keep it covered to reduce evaporation and heating costs; investigate solar heating options.



FIRE PREVENTION

- Provide a way to extinguish fires in all areas used for cooking, including in-room kitchenettes (e.g. Fire Blankets, hand-held BE Dry Powder, Wet Chemical Fire Extinguishers).
- Provide practical training to all staff in the use of portable fire extinguishers (e.g. in conjunction with fire extinguisher supplier).
- Regularly inspect all fire protection systems, including sprinklers, hose reels and extinguishers (e.g. in line with Building Warrant of Fitness Compliance Schedule).



WORKPLACE CULTURE

- Develop induction and training processes that include sustainability as a core element.
- Communicate sustainability objectives to staff (e.g. through inductions, training, meetings), encourage suggestions, actively involve them, and reward achievements (e.g. build values into performance criteria for staff).
- Promote volunteering as an option for further skills development of staff (e.g. in the low season, or allowing time off for volunteering work), and actively encourage staff to follow sustainable practices at home.

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