



VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE

This good practice guide has been developed specifically for tourist attraction businesses, such as interpretive centres, wildlife parks, cultural attractions, historic sites and conservation sites. Further information, tools and similar guides for other types of tourism businesses 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. turning lights and equipment off when not in use).
- Install energy efficient lighting throughout the attraction (e.g. compact fluorescent bulbs, metal halide or high pressure sodium lights, T-8 triphosphor fluorescent lamps, solar exterior lighting).
- Use sensors and timers to turn off heating and lighting in areas occupied intermittently.
- Maximise efficiency of heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (e.g. insulate, use programmable thermostat controls, adjust settings).
- Ensure efficient hot water systems (e.g. on-demand gas water heating, insulate pipework, heat-exchange system to recover and reuse waste heat).
- Investigate using renewable energy sources to meet future energy needs (e.g. solar, wind, biomass, biofuels and ethanol petrol).



RESPECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Follow appropriate conduct when accessing areas significant to tangata whenua (e.g. wāhi tapu – sacred sites).
- Ensure that visitors are aware that they should not touch cultural or historical structures and artefacts (e.g. adzes, waka, rock art).



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

- Develop and adopt a sustainability policy for the business, and review regularly.
- Develop an Action Plan, setting out initiatives 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 a specific agenda item, 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).
- Actively seek sponsorships to develop and enhance the attraction in a sustainable manner (e.g. corporate sponsorship of an exhibit, attraction partnerships in return for promotional/staff benefits).
- Implement a formal visitor feedback process, and include sustainability as an area for comment; introduce customer 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).

Choose a variety of native plants that require less water, pesticides, fertilisers and herbicides, when landscaping.



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MINIMISING WASTE

- List all wastes generated by the business, and think of what can be done to avoid sending them to landfill.
- Choose from the following management options for each waste stream: Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Compost. Regularly check on progress and costs (e.g. conduct simple waste audits).
- Reduce the use of office consumables (e.g. print double sided, reuse paper, keep electronic copies instead of paper, purchase refillable products).
- Where possible, buy products from suppliers that provide a collection, re-use or refill service for containers and packaging.
- Set up recycling stations, providing clearly labelled bins for recyclable and organic wastes.
- 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.
- Look for opportunities to re-use, reprocess and sell by-products generated through normal operation of the business (e.g. animal manure), providing new income streams.
- Safely segregate all hazardous wastes (e.g. fluorescent light tubes, capacitors, chemical containers, batteries, refrigerant gases) and participate in schemes for the safe management of these wastes.
- Lobby council to support your waste management efforts (e.g. supplying kerbside recycling and collection of 'difficult' wastes).



WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

- Recover grey-water from washing processes, for re-use on site (e.g. for washing down exhibit areas, operating water displays, toilet and urinal flushing or lawn and garden irrigation).
- Use biodegradable detergents and cleaning agents for cleaning and quick-break degreasing compounds and detergents (to reduce the emulsification of oils and grease) when carrying out maintenance.
- Collect potentially hazardous liquid wastes (such as disused chemicals, waste oil and grease), for separate processing as special wastes.
- Regularly check and maintain any 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 to treat all runoff from paved car parking areas and maintenance yards. Check, clean and maintain in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Label stormwater grates and cesspits 'tip no wastes – drains to sea' or paint fish symbols (stencils are available from some regional councils).



WATER CONSERVATION

- Identify the main types of water consumption for your business where significant water savings could be achieved (e.g. conduct a water audit); ask your water supplier or plumber for advice.
- Where cost, quality or continuity of supply is an issue, assess opportunities to draw from alternative water supply sources (such as bores or surface water).
- Monitor water consumption for each area of the business (e.g. water features, washdown areas, gardens etc), daily, weekly or monthly, to identify any abnormal consumption and check for leaks (e.g. regularly inspect taps, toilets, valves and pipework, undertake night-time assessment of meters to identify leaks).
- Work with employees to identify water-saving practices (e.g. use dry clean-up methods (sweeping), operate washing appliances only when full).
- Use simple, low cost water saving devices (e.g. weights in non dual-flush toilet cisterns, flow restrictors in water pipes where options exist to reduce pressure, automatic shut-off spray nozzles on hoses).
- When upgrading, install water saving devices (e.g. dual flush or composting toilets, low-flow shower heads and taps, infrared or waterless urinals, self-closing taps).
- Apply mulch to gardens regularly 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 timer or rain sensors.
- Install a rainwater collection system – to collect roof water from existing buildings in tanks (e.g. use for watering tanks, irrigation and/or cleaning).



SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

- When renovating or building, use sustainable materials and products (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).



HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Owner/operators and staff need to programme in holidays at least once a year to enhance personal well-being.
- Implement a health and safety programme for all staff, using templates developed by the Hospitality Association (HANZ).
- Develop and regularly practice emergency procedures (e.g. include evacuation, fire, chemical spill, gas leak, armed robbery, earthquake, power failure, as appropriate).
- Identify and manage all potential hazards and risks that could arise from activities on the site (e.g. develop a register, detailing how hazards and risks will be eliminated, reduced or controlled).
- Ensure all cleaning and maintenance staff are issued with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE); enforce the requirement to wear it.
- 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.

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CHEMICALS AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

- Display supplier-provided Material Safety Data Sheet information (detailing 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 surfaces, drains, windows and floors.
- Use automatic dosing for chemicals for cleaning, 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 cooling equipment to detect and eliminate leakage of ozone-depleting CFC and HCFC gases.
- Convert existing equipment to use low-Ozone Depleting Potential (ODP) or zero-ODP chemicals; ask refrigeration engineers for advice.



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 ratings, recycled content etc).
- Consider 'whole of life cost' in future product sourcing decisions (e.g. whether products can be recycled, sold or donated after use – encourage supplier 'take back' schemes, consider from 'cradle-to-grave').
- Select environmentally certified goods and services, where available (e.g. Environmental Choice).
- Consider 'sustainable' clothing alternatives when sourcing new uniforms (e.g. Eco Fleeces produced from recycled PET plastic, organic merino and cotton fabrics).
- 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 for cleaning and maintenance, and ensure they include requirements for protecting health, safety and the environment (e.g. from product selection to disposal of hazardous substances).
- When selecting new vehicles, consider fuel-type, efficiency and emissions (e.g. choose bio-fuel powered, clean burning diesel) alongside operational needs.
- Use publishers that offer 'green' options for publishing promotional materials (e.g. vegetable-based inks printed on recycled [100% post-consumer content, Process Chlorine Free] paper) and communicate this in printed materials.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- Develop a reusable laminated interpretive guide (as an alternative to paper brochures), to include key information on the attraction as well as details of sustainability initiatives; introduce a refundable deposit to secure return on leaving the attraction.
- Communicate sustainability initiatives on interpretive boards to enhance the visitor experience, and integrate this into any educational programmes in place (e.g. access to worm farm, recycling stations).

Consider 'sustainable' clothing alternatives when sourcing new uniforms (e.g. EcoFleeces produced from recycled PET plastic, organic merino and cotton fabrics).



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- Keep the community informed of initiatives and seek involvement and support (e.g. sustainability-themed open days, loyalty programmes).
- Employ local staff, and offer internships or tourism work-experience.
- Donate time and use of facilities to support a community project.
- Use the proceeds from the sale of unclaimed lost property to support a local charity.
- Develop training programs covering both basic skills and those necessary for promotion, so that local people can be phased into management positions over time.
- Help to develop and actively support other local tourism-related businesses (e.g. pool resources with other locals to market 'destination' packages).
- Establish a partnership with a local school, and work with local and regional partners to support the school and environmental education (e.g. participation in Education Outside The Classroom programmes, sponsorship, mentoring students).
- Identify opportunities to sponsor research projects which will enhance the sustainability of the business (e.g. cleaner production, waste minimisation, renewable energy, wastewater treatment, by-product reprocessing).



WORKPLACE CULTURE

- Develop and implement induction and training processes that include sustainability as a core element; include in operational manuals.
- Communicate sustainability objectives to staff (e.g. through awareness sessions, meetings), encourage suggestions, actively involve them, and reward achievements (e.g. build values into performance criteria for staff).
- Promote volunteering as an option for staff to further develop skills (e.g. in the low season, or allowing time off for volunteering work).



CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVATION

- Choose a variety of 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 neighbouring landowners to control feral animals and invasive weeds within and around the site (e.g. DoC programs, weedbuster groups).
- Establish an organic fruit and vegetable garden or set up an area for permaculture to supply the business with seasonal produce.
- 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 visitors as to how they can make a positive contribution to local conservation efforts (e.g. communicate information on volunteering and sponsorship opportunities).
- Implement team-building days, volunteering on a local conservation project.



CELEBRATE SUCCESS

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

FURTHER INFORMATION:

- UNEP 2005, Integrating Sustainability into Business: A Management Guide for Responsible Tour Operators, www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/library
- UNEP 2003, A Manual for Water and Waste Management: What the Tourism Industry Can Do to Improve Its Performance, www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/library
- UNEP 2003, Switched On: Renewable Energy Opportunities in the Tourism Industry, www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/library
- For details of help that you can get, www.tourism.govt.nz/sustainability

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