



Simple Ways To Green Restaurants: Back of the House

Pollution Prevention in the Hospitality Industry

Have you ever thought about making your restaurant more energy and water efficient? Want some simple ideas for improving the environment and your bottom line? The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2's Pollution Prevention (P2) in the Hospitality Industry website (www.epa.gov/region02/p2/hospitality/index.html) can help. The website offers tips and resources you can use in restaurants to reduce your facility's environmental footprint.

This is part of a series of fact sheets to help you prevent pollution throughout your hospitality facility. Read the entire series for additional resources.

Energy

- Reduce dishwasher hot water temperature. The higher the water temperature, the more energy is needed to heat the water.
- Turn off equipment and standby appliances (e.g., hot food holding cabinets, heat lamps, steamers, broilers) when not in use rather than leaving them on all the time.
- Avoid overfilling refrigerator and freezer shelves. Proper cooling occurs when air can completely circulate, allowing you to set the temperature to the recommended level.
- Purchase energy-efficient lighting systems and other energy-efficient products such as compact fluorescent bulbs, T-8 lamps and electronic ballasts, dishwashers, fryers, griddles, hot food holding cabinets, icemakers, ovens, refrigerators and freezers, and steam cookers.

- Green Teams
- Facilitywide
- Offices
- Guest Rooms
- Restrooms
- Housekeeping
- Operations
- Restaurant – Front
- Restaurant – Back
- Meeting Rooms
- Grounds

Waste

- Allow event attendees to select their meals in advance to avoid leftover food at the end of the event.
- Store perishables in airtight containers or wrap products tightly so that they will last longer.
- Donate excess food for use as animal feed, or assist your local community by arranging for a food bank to pick it up.



- Store food with waste reduction in mind. Keep perishables near the front or top of the refrigerator to encourage employees to use them before they spoil.
- Recycle waste grease, fat, or used cooking oil. Ask your local recycling center how to recycle these types of wastes in the most efficient way possible.

Water

- Adjust ice machine to dispense less ice or reuse ice that is not used. Many ice machines overproduce ice, which wastes water.
- Scrape dishes or presoak them in containers before putting in dishwasher to reduce the need for an additional run. Always run full loads of dishes to avoid frequent dishwasher use.
- Reuse water when possible. For example, wash kitchen preparation areas with water from steam cookers.
- Thaw frozen food overnight in the refrigerator instead of under running water.
- Purchase water-efficient products such as faucets, dishwashers, icemakers, pre-rinse spray valves, waterless woks, and steam cookers.

Indoor Air Quality

- Provide ventilation for any steam to improve indoor air quality. High temperature and humidity levels can increase concentrations of some pollutants.

In the “Going Green” section of the website, find more tips and resources. Start at the top of each list for easier—and less expensive—ideas, and scroll down for more advanced P2 opportunities. Learn how to implement these strategies in your restaurants by visiting the “Resources” section of the website.

Related EPA Resources For Restaurants: Back of the House

ENERGY STAR®

www.energystar.gov

WasteWise

www.epa.gov/wastewise

WaterSense®

www.epa.gov/watersense

Indoor Air Quality in Large Buildings

www.epa.gov/iaq/largebldgs/index.html

EPA Region 2 Pollution Prevention

www.epa.gov/region2/p2

EPA Partnership Programs

www.epa.gov/partners