

GreenGatherings



On behalf of the Minnesota Lodging Association, Minnesota Restaurant Association, Minnesota Resort & Campground Association, the State of Minnesota, U.S. EPA, and GreenGatherings¹ we would like to thank you for your interest in greening your business! Incorporating environmentally-responsible practices not only helps the earth, but it can save you money and help you become a leader in the emerging environmental hospitality market. This guide, through the development of an Action Plan, will help you take those first steps toward becoming a greener business – it's not as hard as you might think!

- 1. Make your baseline assessment*
- 2. Set goals*
- 3. Prepare an Action Plan*
- 4. Submit your Action Plan and get recognized*
- 5. Get to work, and keep it going*

You will automatically receive information from the forthcoming travel green program from Explore Minnesota Tourism on upcoming voluntary self-reporting standards and other green travel opportunities.

¹GreenGatherings is a partnership formed to shape the greening of events, large and small, including Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Ramsey County, Hennepin County, Cities of St. Paul, Bloomington, and Minneapolis, and U.S. EPA Region 5,

GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR ACTION PLAN AND SIGNING UP FOR THE PROPOSED TRAVEL GREEN MINNESOTA SELF REPORTING PROGRAM

Name of Company _____

Contact Person, Title _____

Locations of Participating Facilities _____

Complete Mailing Address _____

Phone, Email _____

1. ASSESS YOUR BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Baseline Measurement – Tracking your progress

Knowing where you are at now will help you figure out where you are going. Here is why:

- Documenting your business's current practices will make it easier to demonstrate financial and environmental improvements.
- Your business can better identify the most cost-effective opportunities for changes in current practices, giving you the greatest return on your investment in green practices.
- It will create important information that can be shared with your customers, giving you a marketing advantage (e.g., dollars saved, carbon off-sets, etc.)

There are three areas in which travel-related businesses can have the most impact, and realize the greatest financial benefit: energy, water, and solid waste. For each you will want to measure use. For example, energy use in kilowatt hours or therms, garbage service use by size of the dumpster and frequency of collection, and cost.

To assess your baseline performance, simply document your current practices for the three environmental principles of energy, water, and waste. This information can be found by either reviewing your bills and receipts for the past year or consulting with your energy, water, or solid waste/recycling service providers to quantify the annual usage amounts and costs of goods and services provided. The tables provided below will assist you in this process. Additional assistance with this process is also available from U.S. EPA voluntary Partnership Programs like ENERGY STAR® and WasteWise. State assistance is available through the MNTAP Program (www.mntap.umn.edu) and MN Waste Wise (www.mnwastewise.org). ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager is the recommended online tool to measure and track energy and water use, and can be accessed at www.energystar.gov/benchmark. When completed, your baseline will help guide development of your action plan.

BASELINE TRACKING SHEET

Note: You do not need to submit this worksheet with your action plan. This is for you to measure your baseline levels and track over time. If you choose to submit the baseline data save a copy for your records to track successes. Submitted data will be compiled into a report which can be used to compare your levels with that of others in the industry. All company names will be withheld from the report.

Energy Type (units)	Quantity Purchased Annually	Annual Cost
Electricity (kWh)		
Electricity Peak Demand (kW)		
Natural Gas (Therms/mcf)		
Oil (gallons)		
LPG (gallons, pounds)		
Diesel Fuel (gallons)		
Gasoline Fuel (gallons)		
Renewable Energy (unit)		
Other Energy		
Total Cost		

Water	Quantity Used Annually	Annual Cost
Purchase		
Disposal		
Total		

Solid Waste Examples of solid wastes include: recyclables, food waste, hazardous waste, construction/demolition, etc.	Quantity Generated Annually (lbs)	Annual Cost
Total		

Note: Contact your hauler for waste, recycling, and (if available) composting weights. If actual weights aren't available, ask for a weekly estimate and multiply by 52 weeks (while accounting for seasonal variations)

STEP 2. SET GOALS

Setting some basic goals will help you understand where you want your business to be in the short and long-term. Goals, both qualitative and quantitative, should tell you what you ultimately want to achieve and the specific strategies are the actions that will get you there. Some of those specific action ideas are outlined below under Action Plan Activities and form the basis of this action plan. Some examples of goals to consider are:

- Reduce water use by 10% in 2008
- Establish a standard recycling program for paper and cardboard, glass and plastic containers, metal, and other business materials in 2008. Or for those who already recycle, reduce disposal costs by 15% and increase recycling by 10% in 2008
- Incorporate local and/or organic food into menu planning
- Reduce energy use by 5% in 2008 and 10% by 2010
- Cut water use by 10% by 2009

Ultimately, setting your own personal goals will help you understand what your business needs to do to achieve them and that, along with your specific action steps outlined in the plan below, will work well with your baseline measurements to track your progress over time.

STEP 3. DEVELOP YOUR ACTION PLAN

Use the Action Plan Activities below to identify the technologies or practices your business can commit to. Assistance in selecting practices to support your goals is available from the web sites and other resources listed at the end of each section. We suggest that you select those greening practices that will give you the highest return on investment and biggest environmental benefit. Each section is followed by a list of resources that can provide information on how to make these decisions and measure the savings.

Information in this action plan can be used for the more comprehensive self-reporting system being developed by Explore Minnesota Tourism and other stakeholders in 2009.

STEP 4: SUBMIT YOUR ACTION PLAN

A completed Action Plan is one in which your business commits to doing at least one activity your business is not already doing in each of the three areas of energy, waste, and water.

There are two options for submitting your plan:

- 1) Mail to MnTAP - c/o Sarah Haas
200 Oak Street SE suite 350
Minneapolis, MN 55455
- 2) Email to mntap@umn.edu

An electronic version of the Action Plan is available at www.mngreengatherings.org. Send questions about your action plan to mntap@umn.edu and include "action plan" in the subject field.

STEP 5. GET TO WORK AND KEEP IT GOING

Once you have prepared your Action Plan, put it to work. Take the steps in your plan, and monitor your electric, water and waste to see how it is paying off.

Explore Minnesota Tourism (EMT), the state's tourism agency, has been charged by the Minnesota Legislature with the development of a travel green program. EMT is working with a powerful and wide-ranging coalition of travel businesses and organizations in the development of this new green lodging and green restaurant program, which is expected to be launched sometime in 2009. Once that program is ready, you will be contacted with more information on how to participate further.

ACTION PLAN ACTIVITIES²

Already Doing		Plan to do by 6/30/09	Energy Savings Action Step Applies to both hotels and restaurants
>1 year	< 1 year		
			Ask your energy company or an energy service to conduct an energy audit of your facility. Incorporate one or more of the recommendations.
			Replace standard equipment and appliances, as they wear out, with ENERGY STAR qualified models. For more information on commercial food service equipment, visit www.energystar.gov/cfs
			Use an energy management system to control lighting, heating, and cooling.
			Replace incandescent bulbs with ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent lights, upgrade existing fluorescent lighting with T-8 lamps with electronic ballasts, and retrofit exit signs with LEDs or fluorescent bulbs. Compact florescent lighting provides bright, warm light but uses about 75% less energy than standard lighting, produces 75% less heat, and lasts up to 10 times longer.
			Reduce energy and water by implementing one or more of the following simple water saving steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • install a low-flow valve on pre-rinse sprayers • run full dishwasher and laundry loads • turn down the temperature • install low-flow shower heads in guest rooms • phase in continuous “on demand” or “tankless” water heaters that only heat water when you need it
			Become an ENERGY STAR partner. Join at www.energystar.gov/join .
			Track energy and water use with ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. Make incremental improvements of 10% or more and strive to earn the ENERGY STAR Label.
			Activate the power management feature on computers, copiers, and fax machines to save energy when not in use.

Resources related to energy:

Energy Star	www.energystar.gov
Center for Energy and the Environment	www.mncee.org
Centerpoint Energy	www.centerpointenergy.com
Minnesota Energy Resources	www.minnesotaenergyresources.com
The Weidt Group	www.twgi.com
Xcel Energy Group	www.xcelenergy.com
District Energy	www.districtenergy.com
MN Green Roof Cncl	www.mngreenroofs.org

Already Doing		Plan to do by 6/30/09	Prevent Waste and Pollution Action Step Applies to both hotels and restaurants
>1 year	< 1 year		
			Conduct a waste assessment to identify the different types of waste your business produces and determine how to reduce that waste or handle it in an environmentally responsible way through increased recycling and the purchase of recycled-content products (e.g., products that are made with post-consumer recycled materials or natural and biodegradable products). A number of agencies can assist you with this process including MnTAP, Minnesota Waste Wise, and some county offices.
			Recycle all of the following that your business generates including: glass bottles, plastic bottles (#1 and 2), aluminum and steel cans, newspapers, office paper, and cardboard.
			Donate excess or leftover edible food and food products to food pantries or food banks, set up composting where available, or join a food-to-livestock program. Several programs exist throughout the Twin Cities. Connect with Minnesota Waste Wise for details.
			Document your operating procedures, including waste reduction and recycling measures. Educate and train staff on sustainable purchasing (bulk products, limited packaging, products close to home, etc.), handling, recycling, and maintenance procedures.
			Purchase local and organic foods. Connecting with local food producers not only means fresh product but it also has a major impact on the resources needed to produce that food including energy, water, waste, and pesticide savings.
			Become a member of MN Waste Wise (www.mnwastewise.org) and utilize their resources to reduce and recycle your business waste
			Evaluate and restructure inventory system. Identify opportunities to reduce food spoilage issues through changes in rotation, storage, etc.
			Set up a free solid waste assessment with MnTAP (www.mntap.umn.edu) to learn about ways to reduce the amount of waste generated.
Hotel Specific			
			Provide newspapers to customers only on request.
			Add public recycling containers for guests in the lobby, exits, pool areas, and rooms for standard items like bottles, cans, and paper products.
			Replace in-room plastic cups with glass cups.
			Use bulk-dispensed shampoos and other amenities in guest rooms or donate half-used amenity bottles to local shelters, nursing homes, or halfway houses.
			Install recycled content carpet and/or carpet squares. Carpet squares can be replaced one at a time as needed. A number of companies will take back stained or torn tiles and recycle them. This helps reduce costs and reduce waste.

Waste and Pollution Resources:

Recycling

Recycling Association of Minnesota

www.recycleminnesota.org

Recycle MORE Minnesota

www.Recyclemoremn.org

Reduce.Org

www.Reduce.org

Recyclaholics

www.recyclaholics.com

Green Guardian

www.GreenGuardian.com

Waste Management Options

Eureka Recycling

www.eurekarecycling.org

Hennepin County Business Waste Assistance Program

www.Hennepin.us

Ramsey County Business Waste Assistance Program:

www.co.ramsey.mn.us

Randy's Sanitation

www.randyssanitation.com

Barthold Farms

www.bartholdrecycling.com

Waste Management Inc

www.wastemanagement.com

Taitt and Associates

www.jltaitt.com

Minnesota Materials Exchange

www.mnexchange.org

Source Reduction

Minnesota Technical Assistance Program

www.mntap.umn.edu

Minnesota Waste Wise

www.mnchamber.com/about/wise_waste.cfm

Already Doing		Plan to do by 6/30/09	Conserve and Protect Water Action Step <i>Applies to both hotels and restaurants</i>
>1 year	< 1 year		
			Establish a preventative maintenance schedule to find and repair leaky faucets, toilets, pipes, and shower heads.
			Have local water utility or water conservation service conduct a water audit of your facility. Go to www.energystar.gov/benchmark for more information.
			As standard equipment wears out, replace with water-efficient models, such as those with low-flow aerators, spray valves and shower heads, ultra-low-flow toilets, automatic faucets, etc. (See Table for additional equipment and savings estimates.)
			Use non-toxic, phosphate-free, biodegradable laundry detergents and cleaning products.
			Turn off dishwashers when not in use. Wash full loads only.
			Use water from steam tables to wash down cooking areas.
			Use dish washing detergents that are biodegradable and are free of nitrilotriacetic acid, phosphates, or chlorine bleach.
			Turn off the continuous flow used to wash the drain trays of the coffee, milk, and soda islands.
			Install high-pressure, low-volume spray nozzle for pre-washing dishes.
			Plan ahead and thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator rather than under running water.
Hotel Specific			
			Limit large lawn areas. Practice water conservation which could include installing low-volume irrigation; using ground cover, mulch, native plants or other plants appropriate to local weather and soil conditions; and watering only when needed. Costs can be saved from a reduction in chemical purchase, as well as maintenance fees.
			Provide educational materials for your customers about environmentally preferable lodging or restaurant practices.
			Install new water-saving pool filter for swimming pools.
			Establish a linen reuse program that allows customers to choose whether to have their sheets and towels washed daily.

Water Resource:

Brac Systems
 Deep Rock Water
 Kohler
 Water Conservation Hotel and Motel Program
 EPA Watersense
 Alliance for Water Efficiency

www.bracsystems.com
www.deeprokwater.com
www.kohler.com
www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/conservation/waterchamp
www.epa.gov/watersense
www.AllianceForWaterEfficiency.org

Additional Resources:

General Resources

Energy Star	www.energystar.gov
MN WasteWise	www.mnchamber.com/about/wise_waste.cfm
EPA and EPA WasteWise	www.epa.gov/region5
U of MN Tourism Center	www.tourism.umn.edu/research/sustainabletourism/index.html
Green Seal	www.greenseal.org/programs/lodging.cfm
Green Hotels Association:	www.greenhotels.com
Hospitality Minnesota	www.hospitalitymn.com
Explore Minnesota	www.exploreminnesota.com
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Small Business Assistance:	www.pca.state.mn.us/sbeap
Minnesota Technical Assistance Program	www.mntap.umn.edu
USGBC Mississippi Headwaters Chapter	www.chapters.usgbc.org/usgbcmmn
City of Minneapolis	www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us
City of Saint Paul	www.stpaul.gov
Green Lodging News	www.greenlodgingnews.com
Minnesota GreenGatherings	www.MNGreenGatherings.org
Buffalo Ridge*	www.waterbillboards.com/

Transit

Minneapolis Transportation Management Organization	www.mplstmo.org
Saint Paul Transportation Management Organization	www.stpaultmo.org

Products

Ecolab	www.ecolab.com
Restore Products	www.restoreproducts.com
Aset Supply & Paper	www.asetupplyandpaper.com
Aveda	www.aveda.com
Dalco	www.dalcoonline.com
Litin Paper	www.epartypaper.com
Multi-Clean	www.multi-clean.com
Biocorp, Inc	www.biocorpusa.com
Indaco Manufacturing Ltd	www.indaco.ca
Amazon Environmental	www.nvo.com/amazon
Hirshfields	www.hirshfields.com
Interface Sustainability	www.interfacesustainability.com
Mayer Fabrics	www.mayerfabrics.com
Mohawk Flooring	www.mohawk-flooring.com

Imaging Path

www.imagingpath.com

Great Printer Environmental Initiative

www.pimn.org/environment/greatprinter.htm

Prairie Technologies

www.prairie-tech.com

Food

Minnesota Grown Farms

www.mda.state.mn.us/food/minnesotagrown

Green Restaurant Program (Env. Law and Policy Center)

www.greenrestaurants.org

Green Restaurant Assoc.

www.dinegreen.com

²The identification of a business as green does not imply any kind of endorsement or verification of claims from the State of Minnesota, Hospitality Minnesota, the Minnesota Restaurant, Lodging, Resort & Campground Associations, U.S. EPA, or GreenGatherings. This action plan is intended as a first step to green your business leading to the upcoming self-reporting program currently in being developed by Explore Minnesota Tourism and other stakeholders. By submitting this action plan, you are also agreeing to receive future communications about the self-reporting travel green program.

**There are a number of environmental concerns associated with bottled water and additional challenges with the introduction of compostable bottles into the traditional recycling stream. The MPCA has discussed these concerns with Buffalo Ridge Water Company and has offered to work with them to help resolve these issues long term but we wanted to make those issues clear to attendees so there are no misunderstandings about this product. The three main issues are the overall energy and greenhouse gas implications associated with bottled water in general, contamination of existing PET plastic recycling with compostable bottles, and ensuring a closed loop collection system so compostable bottles are indeed composted.*