

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHEET



Could your family be affected?

EPA has found that indoor air can be more polluted than outdoor air. Since we spend over 90% of our time indoors, we risk inhaling more pollutants when we are guests at lodging properties than when we are outside.

— Green Seal

One hotel has posted their environmental program on their Web site (www.habitatsuites.com).

— Habitat Suites,
Austin, TX

Green Seal has initiated a certification program to help travelers, meeting planners, and government and corporate travel buyers identify environmentally responsible lodging properties.

— Green Seal



Reducing Air Pollution from: The Hospitality Industry (Lodging Sector)

Why should lodging properties reduce air pollution?

People who are exposed to toxic air pollutants at sufficient concentrations, for sufficient durations, may increase their chances of getting cancer or experiencing other serious health effects, such as reproductive problems, birth defects, and aggravated asthma.

Pollution prevention can reduce the impact of air pollution by using materials, processes, or practices that reduce or eliminate air pollution at the source.

The hospitality industry encompasses a wide range of services and activities such as lodging, restaurants, food services, and convention centers. The lodging sector consists of hotels, motels, resorts, and bed and breakfasts. Maintenance and operations activities within the lodging sector may release pollutants into the air and may contribute to health concerns at lodging properties and in the community.

The best lodging properties implement pollution prevention strategies not only to comply with federal, state, local, and Tribal laws but also to further minimize impacts on human health and the environment. Check with your state, local, and Tribal agencies for existing regulations.

What kinds of air pollutants may come from lodging properties?

- Lodging properties can produce toxic air pollutants and ozone-depleting substances.
- Cleaning supplies, synthetic materials, paints, and pesticides can release toxic air pollutants and volatile organic compounds (VOC). Although emitted indoors, these air pollutants will also eventually leak into the outdoor air through doors, ventilation systems, and other openings. Once outside, the chemicals in these substances can

react in the air to form ground-level ozone (smog), which has been linked to a number of respiratory effects.

- Ozone-depleting substances such as chlorofluorocarbons may be released by improperly maintained heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units, refrigeration units, and fire extinguishers.

How can lodging properties reduce air pollution?

Making changes in how lodging properties maintain their facilities can stop pollutants at the source and improve indoor air quality. By evaluating and improving work practices, lodging properties can decrease emissions, reduce operating costs, and protect employee and public health.

Examples of changes in work practices that help reduce air pollution include:

Changing Cleaners

- When possible, use non-toxic products. For example, instead of products with toxic ingredients to clean and polish furniture, use lemon oil.
- Purchase cleaners with low toxic air pollutant and VOC content.
- Choose pump-style sprays, which emit fewer toxic air pollutants and VOC.

Maintaining Buildings

- Use water-based, or other less toxic, paints and coatings.
- Regularly inspect floors to determine where the most wear occurs. Refinish only those portions.
- If available, use indoor furniture made of wood instead of pressed wood products, which can emit toxic air pollutants.

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Controlling Ozone-Depleting Substance Emissions

- Use “good housekeeping” measures, such as checking for leaks in HVAC units and refrigeration systems, during equipment maintenance and operation.
- Recover and reuse ozone-depleting substances.
- At the end of equipment service life, replace with new and more efficient equipment that does not use ozone-depleting substances.
- Inspect halon-containing fire extinguishers frequently for leaks. Repair or replace faulty equipment.

As a community, what can you do to help reduce air pollution from lodging properties?

Make Connections

- Get to know local lodging property managers because they know best about the materials and operations used in their businesses and the regulations with which they must comply.
- Keep local media aware of progress by sending them updates. Publicity can reward success and attract more public involvement.

Make a Plan

- One idea is to form a work group that includes local lodging owners and operators to develop and implement a workable pollution reduction plan.

Locate Resources

- Use the “For Further Information” list below to find governmental and nonprofit contacts who can provide help with analysis, technical information, equipment, and funding.

Encourage Lodging Properties to “Go Green.”

- A “green” lodging property is a property that is managed to be environmentally-friendly through a conscious effort to reduce pollution.
- Use media connections to provide coverage for successful efforts in reducing pollution. Positive publicity for successful “greening” efforts can mean increased business.
- Visibly displayed awards or certificates stating that the lodging property is a “green” property may also increase business.
- Motivate lodging property managers to become involved in “green” organizations for the hospitality industry such as Green Seal or the “Green” Hotels Association.

For Further Information

- American Hotel and Lodging Association: www.ahla.com, (202) 289-3100
- Community-Based Projects: www.epa.gov/air/toxicair/community.html
- “Green” Hotels Association (Information specific to lodging properties): www.greenhotels.com, (713) 789-8889
- Green Seal: www.greenseal.org, (202) 872-6400
- EPA Air Toxics Web Site: www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/
- EPA Green Meetings Web Site: www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/
- Community information, regional, state contacts: www.epa.gov/epahome/whereyoulive.htm
- Pollution prevention awards: State, local, and Tribal government agencies, universities
- For more information, please see the Resources section of the Owner/Operator Information Sheet.

