

Greening Your Meeting

Follow these green practices in order to minimize environmental and local impact for your next meeting:



Use Paperless Technology. Use new media and electronic technology to cut down your paper use. For instance, send online "e-vites" as invitations, create a conference website, offer electronic registration and confirmation, and advertise using the Web and/or e-mail.



Use Recycled Products. Have all handouts printed on two sides using post-consumer recycled paper. Use recycled-content promotional products when deciding on pens, bags, shirts, and caps. There are beautiful awards made of recycled glass too!



Meet Nearby. Select meeting sites within walking distance, or provide information on how to utilize public transportation to reduce additional transportation needs.



Use the Off Switch. Coordinate with the meeting venue to ensure that lights and air conditioning will be turned off when rooms are not in use.



Bulk Up. Have your food & beverage service provider use bulk dispensers for sugar, salt, pepper, cream, mustard, ketchup, and other condiments — avoid small, individual portion packages.



Serve Well. Ask your food providers to use glass or china plates and cups. If plastic items are used, they must be washable (biodegradable or compostable is better). No Styrofoam under any circumstances. Also, ask for napkins to be cloth whenever possible and use coasters instead of cocktail napkins.



Recycle. Put out recycling bins for attendees to use at food areas and in places where paper is generated (e.g., registration table), and especially in exhibit and special activity areas. And if you use a private facility, get information on its recycling program.



Eat Green. Include vegetarian meals, and have meals planned using local, organic, and seasonal produce. See if your food providers can offer your attendees free-range options as well as beef and seafood from sustainable farms and fisheries.



Conserve Water. Have the meeting venue serve drinking water in water coolers or pitchers rather than in individual bottles. In addition to benefiting the environment, this process saves money. One client of Meeting Strategies Worldwide saved \$25,000 by not using plastic-bottled water at its conference.



Spread the Wealth. Donate leftover food to local food banks and charities.

Source: BlueGreen Meetings, Greenbuild Alliance, Meeting Strategies Worldwide