



You Asked About...

Greening Your Meetings and Events

Whether you are hosting an in-house meeting or an event for external groups, there are several sources of waste and pollution that you should consider. This tip sheet provides information about a number of things you can do to reduce your meetings impact on the environment. Many of these ideas will also reduce costs for the meeting organizer.

Talk to Service Providers

- Where possible select a service provider that offers "green" services/events.
- Tell vendors and service providers about your plans to "green" the event.
- Provide vendors with a copy of this fact sheet to help explain your goals.
- If using a hotel as the venue for your meeting, select one that has an in-house environmental program or participates in one of the national hotel environmental programs (e.g., GreenLeaf).

Planning, Promotion, Registration

- Publicize your event using industry newsletters, association web sites , community papers and local media instead of using brochures and mass mailings.
- Send out promotional materials by email.
- Reduce paper use by providing email, phone or online registration.
- Reduce excess purchasing and waste by ordering only what you need - get firm numbers of participants.
- If using printed material, ensure it is double-sided.
- At the registration desk use adhesive paper name badges instead of paper badges in plastic holders.
- If producing brochures, participant manuals or kits, use "green" print job specifications.
- Strive for a paperless event. Encourage presenters to limit handouts to only the essentials and offer to circulate presentations and handouts by email or post them on a website after the event.
- Circulate minutes and summary of proceedings by email or internet.
- Ensure that promotional items are environmentally preferable and likely to be used (e.g., mechanical pencils instead of disposable pens, travel mugs, calculators, coupons/gift certificates, snack items (often a hit with the overnight crowd) recycled paper products, LED flashlights or key-chain lights etc.
- For speakers gifts consider unique locally made items, locally produced consumable items (e.g., maple syrup, wine, handmade chocolates) or gift certificates from national chains that can be used at a later date.

The Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Program provides assurance that lodging facilities have met environmental best practices standards that are required for their rating of one to five Green Leafs. A full listing of Nova Scotia hotels participating in the Green leaf program can be found at www.terrachoice.com under "certification"

Meeting Room Set up

- Ensure recycling and compost bins are placed in visible locations post clear signage and notify attendees that they are available.
- Use reusable exhibition or promotional signs whenever possible.
- Request that pens and note pads not be set out on the tables. Instead, ask for a small supply to be left at the back of the room to be used if needed.
- Request white boards be placed in the room instead of flip charts.
- Request low/no odor markers.
- Request water carafes and glasses instead of bottled water .

Food and Beverage Service

- Don't over estimate food service orders - order for only the number of participants that have confirmed their attendance.
- Request cloth napkins instead of paper.
- If using paper products request those with a high post-consumer recycled fibre content.
- Provide or request reusable plates, cups and silverware instead of disposables.
- Request organic and or fair trade coffee, tea and sugar where available. Locally packaged fair trade coffee, and to a lesser extent tea and sugar, is readily available in Nova Scotia through large super market chains and smaller specialty food retail outlets.
- Request local food where possible. Look for the Select Nova Scotia Logo. For more information on where to find local food see www.selectnovascotia.ca
- Serve sugar, cream and condiments in reusable dishes rather than single serving packages.
- Avoid disposable stir sticks and straws.

- Serve water and juice in refillable pitchers and glasses rather than bottles or foam cups.
- If providing lunch, request that desert and beverage items not be cleared at the end of the lunch hour. Participants can enjoy snacking on them during the afternoon session rather than having them go to waste.

Accommodations

For meetings with out of town participants:

- Select locations that minimize travel distance for attendees.
- When using hotels, select facilities that have progressive environmental programs, consider Green Leaf rated facilities.
- Select a location close to evening entertainment, restaurants and shopping for out of town participants.
- Select locations that are easily accessible by public transit.
- For larger groups, consider provide shuttle services between meetings, accommodations or restaurants.

Why Green your Meeting

Greening your meetings can actually make them run more smoothly by reducing photocopying and set up time. A few simple steps in advance can reduce the workload overall. Most green meeting initiatives go unnoticed by the attendees. Most people will not notice the use of reusable signs, recycled paper or white boards instead of flip charts. However, many people who are traveling to attend the meeting appreciate the ease of being able to collect all of the handouts and references via email or a website when they return to their offices. This also enables them to easily share information with interested colleagues who did not attend the meeting.