

How to green your business: Restaurants, pubs and bars

Want to Go Green but not sure where to start? Here are some tips to reduce the environmental impacts of your restaurant, pub or bar.

Energy

Heating and cooling

- In pubs, 35-40% energy is used in cellar cooling. Insulate cellars and cool areas against heat gain.
- When heating, reduce the temperature of a room by one degree; it is unlikely that anyone will notice and you could cut the heating bill by as much as 10%. Most people are comfortable at 19°C. Similarly, set air conditioning not to come on below 24°C.
- Make sure windows and doors are closed when heating or air conditioning is on.
- Install local water heaters. Otherwise reduce the temperature of stored hot water (to a minimum of 60°C to avoid Legionella bacteria breeding).
- Service boilers regularly for optimum performance and insulate. A boiler can use up to 10% more energy if poorly maintained. Dirty heat exchangers, poor air:fuel mixing or faulty components increase running costs and the risk of breakdown.
- Insulate roof spaces, hot water tanks, pipe work against heat loss.
- Replace patio heaters with infrared radiant heaters.

Refrigeration

- The energy costs of running equipment are typically three times higher than the original purchase price. The more energy efficient units can save as much as 50% of the running costs.
- Fit night blinds or use a PVC strip curtain on open-type retail cabinets to cut energy consumption and stabilise the temperature of the cabinet to maintain quality of food. PVC strip curtains reduce energy costs by an average of £100/year per cabinet.

Unless it is a display cabinet, use solid rather than glass doors.

- If stored goods are non-perishable, such as soft drinks and beers, then turn the cabinets off when not needed e.g. when closed. Use a timer to turn them on again two hours before they are needed so that the product will be cold. This can save 25% of running costs.
- Check that the temperatures are correct.
- Check that the air flows are not blocked.
- Get maintenance contractor to clean condensers and or ventilation grilles at least twice a year.

Lighting

- Replace tungsten bulbs with energy-efficient, compact fluorescent lamps and slimline tubes. They typically make immediate savings of 50% and last up to ten times longer.
- Use natural light wherever possible. Keep windows clean and encourage the staff to open the blinds rather than turn on the lights. Clean light fittings, especially plastic diffusers. Make sure lights can be switched off manually (particularly near windows) or install daylight sensors.
- Install presence detector lighting controls in places not in constant use, e.g. toilets and store rooms.
- Ensure lighting controls are clearly labelled, especially if they are grouped together.

Waste

Reduce material use

- Avoid overproduction of marketing and publicity material by reviewing distribution lists and regularly updating databases.
- Cancel junk mail and unwanted publications.
- Choose minimally packaged products or ask your suppliers to supply products in less packaging. Ask your suppliers to take excess packaging away with them when they deliver.
- Renovate furniture rather than buying new replacements, this can save up to 50% of the costs of new products.
- Compost excess food waste.

Legal compliance

- Ensure that special waste disposal procedures are in place for items such as oil containers, sanitary waste and fluorescent lighting tubes.

Water

- Fit a water displacement device in mono-flush toilet cisterns to reduce the amount of water per flush.
- Fit an automatic flush controller on urinal systems to ensure that the cistern flushes only during hours of use, or after use, rather than continuously. These devices can reduce water use and costs by 50%.
- Fit existing urinals with deodorising pads to remove the need for water flushing, or consider installing waterless urinals if refurbishment is due. Potential savings are between £70 - £170/urinal/year.
- Push-button taps use half the water of conventional taps, cannot be left on accidentally, help prevent floods in the event of a sink becoming blocked and are more reliable than hydraulic models, especially in areas of bad limescale.
- Check your pipes for leaks, which can be expensive and can cause damage to the building. Check your meter readings regularly and carefully - if you are paying for water that you cannot account for you may have a leak.

Travel

- Publicise alternative transport links to customers.
- Offer staff interest-free loans for public transport season tickets.
- Improve facilities for staff cyclists and walkers. Essentials are secure bike racks, showers and lockers.
- Promote car sharing. Establish a database or an informal meeting for prospective car sharers and guarantee a free taxi ride in an emergency.
- Re-assess your car parking arrangements to include priority parking for car sharers, or charges for non-essential user parking. Use the money raised to fund transport projects.

Purchasing

- Purchase equipment with an EU Energy Rating of A or B.
- Use 100% recycled paper (with maximum post-consumer waste content) and maximum percentage recycled materials wherever possible.
- Avoid purchasing disposable catering products such as sugar sachets, paper plates, paper napkins, plastic cups and cutlery.
- Ask suppliers to provide locally sourced food.
- Consider altering menus to promote fruits and vegetables that are in season, reducing associated 'food miles'.