

Best Practices for Seattle Property Managers

Seattle Green Properties

On May 6th 2008, Seattle Public Utilities' Resource Venture program hosted *Seattle Green Properties*, a resource conservation forum for property managers. Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy also participated, providing property managers with recommended best practices for preventing and managing waste, conserving water and energy, and properly managing stormwater runoff from their properties.

This article summarizes these best environmental practices for property managers. For more information, contact Resource Venture: 206-343-8505, email help@resourceventure.org, or visit us on line at www.resourceventure.org.

Waste & Recycling

Most property managers can reduce costs with simple updates to waste and recycling services at the properties they manage. These changes require minimal investment and offer immediate savings.

- Adjust collection service to ensure properties receive the largest waste and recycling containers with the fewest number of pickups.
- Begin food scrap recycling. A great money saver, food scrap collection has become common practice and an expectation of tenants in Seattle area residential and commercial properties. Find a list of contractors, container suggestions, labels, and employee education tips at www.resourceventure.org.
- Improve recycling programs to ensure all commonly recycled items like cans, bottles and paper, are recycled throughout tenant areas. Often existing program are in need of simple upgrades like placing containers in more convenient locations, better labeling and switching from separated bins for all materials to collection of all recyclables in the same containers – referred to as 'commingled' recycling.
- Prevent waste by organizing tenant swaps and sales, and designating "re-use" rooms where one tenant can find reuse for another tenant's discarded furniture or other household or office items.

Water

Rebates are available for upgrades to water efficient fixtures and appliances. Visit www.savingwater.org for more information about the incentives listed below and other ideas for conserving water at home or work. These rebate programs extend to areas outside Seattle. For a list of specific jurisdictions eligible for cost-saving incentives and assistance, visit www.savingwater.org.

- Earn a \$80 to \$120 rebate for each efficient toilet or urinal replaced, OR
- Earn \$80 for replacing an older tank model with an efficient FlushStar toilets, OR
- Replace with *free* Western Pottery Aris toilets
- Earn \$100-\$125 per qualified laundry machines
- Don't forget to recycle your old toilets with Renton Concrete Recyclers!*
- Install aerators and water-efficient showerheads.
- Upgrade irrigation systems to newer models that account for rainfall, seasonal fluctuations and notify the operator of leaks and line breaks.
- Minimize discretionary use of water – sweep, don't hose down sidewalks!
- Ask tenants to report leaks, and fix them as quickly as possible.
- Consider sub-metering high-water using tenants (such as restaurants and delis) to track and conserve water use.

Drainage

Only rain belongs down outdoor storm drains. The water flowing down indoor sanitary drains should be free of greasy substances to avoid back ups. Visit www.resourceventure.org for door-hangers, signs and posters reminding residents and kitchen staff of proper disposal of fats, oils and grease. Also find lists of contractors that provide drain and grease trap cleaning services, and grease recycling collection.

- Property owners are responsible for periodically cleaning out catch basins, and keeping the areas around drains clear of debris and oil.
- Property managers can help tenants understand the impact of fats, oils and grease washed down sink drains by providing information to residents or food related tenants about proper cleaning of pots, pans and tubs containing butter, mayonnaise, dressing, sauce, gravy, cooking oil etc.. These greasy substances build up in

sanitary sewer pipes and eventually lead to costly back ups that cause flooding and property damage in residences and businesses.

- Receive a free spill kit, staff training and a spill response plan by completing an application form at www.resourceventure.org. Knowledgeable staff will visit your property, help you understand your drainage system and find a convenient location for storing your spill kit.

Energy

Energy represents the single largest controllable operating expense for office buildings. For more information and assistance visit Seattle City Light at www.seattle.gov/light or Puget Sound Energy at www.pse.com.

- Install simple control systems, such as occupancy sensors. These may be expensive but result in big savings.
- Switch from incandescent to fluorescent lights, with occupancy sensors.
- Install efficient HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems, with occupancy sensors that regulate air flow levels based on the occupancy of a room.
- Pay attention to the needs of your building operators. Operators are critical to efficiently managed systems.
- Calibrate thermostats and sensors. Inaccuracies in readings increase energy consumption, sometimes significantly.
- Perform periodic boiler tune-ups, change filters, clean coils, windows and light fixtures.
- Turn down energy use during unoccupied periods. These include night setbacks to ensure lighting and HVAC shut down during unoccupied periods and reduced heating (between 68 and 70°F) and cooling (74 and 76°F).
- Encourage tenants to turn off 'hidden energy users' including computers, printers, monitors, and coffee makers.

Climate

For more information, or to join the Seattle Climate Partnership, visit www.seattle.gov/climate/partnership.

- Join the Seattle Climate Partnership.
- Commit to reducing your property or company carbon footprint.
- Measure your carbon footprint using an on-line carbon calculator <http://www.seattle.gov/climate/SCPresources>.
- Obtain LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance certification. LEED for Existing Buildings: O&M performance standards address issues such as site maintenance, water conservation, indoor air quality, energy saving programs, recycling facilities and programs, purchasing practices, and green cleaning.
- Make a plan and take action by recycling, reducing energy and water use, encouraging alternative employee and tenant commuting.

Establish a plan and promote success

Put together a written resource conservation plan. For green promotion help, visit www.resourceventure.org.

- Key components should include increased recycling and waste management, water conservation, stormwater management, green building strategies and recycled content, non-toxic supply purchasing. The plan should also include staff involvement and education, facility audits, financial analysis, integrated building upgrades, equipment purchasing, new construction and preventive maintenance.
- Enter awards programs that recognize environmental achievements. Participate in state or national green building certification programs. Create an electronic newsletter to keep your tenants and staff up to speed on your green initiatives. Attend green industry events to help get the word out about your building, and offer yourself as a potential speaker or panelist for such events.

Resources:

Resource Venture	www.resourceventure.org
Water	www.savingwater.org
Climate	www.seattle.gov/climate/partnership
Energy	www.seattle.gov/light www.energystar.gov
Green Building	www.usgbc.org

Resource Venture provides outreach, education, and technical assistance to help businesses conserve resources, reduce or prevent pollution, and become more sustainable. The program is a service of Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) and both general outreach services and customized assistance are offered in waste prevention and recycling, water conservation, stormwater pollution prevention and green building.