

FLORIDA GREEN LODGING PROGRAM INFORMATION

Launched in 2004, the Florida *Green Lodging* Program is a voluntary initiative of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that reviews, designates and recognizes lodging facilities that make a commitment to conserve and protect Florida's natural resources. The program's environmental guidelines allow lodging facilities to evaluate their operations, set goals and take specific actions to continuously improve environmental performance.

How does a facility achieve *Green Lodging* designation?

To become designated, facilities must apply to the program and choose to implement a specified number of environmental practices.

What are the benefits?

- Designated facilities are featured on the Florida *Green Lodging* Web site.
- Designees are granted exclusive use of the *Green Lodging* logo and green marketing tool kit. The kit features templates, logos and design files to create guest room signage; bilingual, educational posters for employees; and displays for guest areas.
- Facilities receive an official Florida *Green Lodging* certificate signifying their environmental achievement and commitment to protecting Florida's natural resources.
- Management and staff have "24/7" Web access to Best Management Practices, Technical Assistance and green resources that can help lower power, water and waste bills and help reduce operational costs in many areas.

How do facilities get started?

As a start, facilities should review *Green Lodging* requirements online to help identify operations that need environmental improvement. Once identified, facilities can begin the Designation Application.

Designation Application

The Designation Application is a comprehensive evaluation tool that details Florida *Green Lodging* requirements and provides Best Management Practices and Technical Assistance to help facilities achieve designation. Facilities conduct a thorough property assessment and implement a specified number of environmental practices in five areas of sustainable operations:

- I. Communication and Education (Guests, Employees, Public)
- II. Waste Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling
- III. Water Conservation
- IV. Energy Efficiency
- V. Indoor Air Quality

All environmental practices have a point value. Facilities must obtain a minimum of 212 points to qualify for *Green Lodging* designation.

When all requirements are met and environmental practices fully implemented, the facility completes the application and submits it, along with required documentation, to the Florida *Green Lodging* Program. The Florida *Green Lodging* Program evaluates each facility's application and documentation, and notifies facilities of their designation status.

Palm Levels

In an effort to better recognize the state's lodging properties for their commitment to protecting the state's natural resources, the Florida *Green Lodging* Program is incorporating a 4-level tiered designation. The tiered structure is an expansion of the previous "Palm" levels that were once part of the program until 2009. Facilities will be able to obtain different "Palm" levels based on the total number of points received when implementing criteria to receive their designation. The "Palm" levels are as follows:

- One Palm designations will need between 212 and 398 points.
- Two Palm designations will need between 399 and 557.
- Three Palm designations will need between 558 and 717.
- Four Palm designations will need between 718 and 796.

How long is a facility considered designated?

Florida *Green Lodging* designation is valid for three years from the date of issuance with the requirement that facilities submit environmental performance data (water, waste, energy) annually.

To ensure that facilities maintain designation standards, the Florida *Green Lodging* Program conducts selected facility assessments on a regular basis and monitors feedback provided by guest comments and responses to the Florida *Green Lodging* survey.

How does a facility renew designation?

Designation is renewed every three years. To renew:

- Facilities must have submitted their environmental performance data (water, waste, energy) for each of the three years, and must implement at least *two new* environmental practices from any of the five areas of sustainable operations.
- Facilities are also required to conduct, and document ongoing employee education to ensure all personnel are implementing the Best Management Practices.

Can a property be removed from the program?

The Florida *Green Lodging* Program is a voluntary initiative. It is the responsibility of designated facilities to meet and maintain program requirements. To monitor compliance, the Florida *Green Lodging* Program conducts selected facility assessments on a regular basis and solicits feedback from guest comments through the Florida *Green Lodging* survey. If deficiencies are noted, the Florida *Green Lodging* Program offers assistance to correct them. Consistent failure to correct deficiencies will result in removal from the program. If a lodging facility is unable or unwilling to maintain program requirements, it will be removed from the Web site and no longer identified with The Florida *Green Lodging* Program through name or use of the Florida *Green Lodging* logo.

Obtain Buy-in from Top Management

Support from the top is essential to achieving Florida *Green Lodging* designation. Management's commitment to achieving Florida *Green Lodging* designation lets employees know that resource conservation is an important work responsibility.

Select an Environmental Champion and Create a "Green Team."

Fulfilling *Green Lodging* requirements and initiating new practices are easier and quicker if the effort is lead by an enthusiastic coordinator with good communication and organizational skills and a group of employees who are responsible for ensuring that all environmental improvement practices the property is implementing are being performed accurately and on time.

Evaluate Your Current Environmental Performance

Before embarking on fulfilling *Green Lodging* requirements, it is helpful to identify and evaluate opportunities to improve your facility's current environmental performance by conducting a walk- through of the entire property.

Facilities working toward Florida *Green Lodging* designation should review the [Best Management Practices](#) for guidance on managing water use, waste reduction, energy conservation and improving indoor air quality. Recommendations are provided for improving operating efficiencies throughout the facility.

Specific "how-to" information is provided in the [Technical Assistance](#) section of the Web site. From guest amenities to storing spent fluorescent bulbs, the Technical Assistance section is a key problem-solving resource for facilities seeking to improve their environmental performance through Florida *Green Lodging* designation.