



Green Meetings at “The National Conference Center”



In an effort to “green” its meetings and put some muscle behind its name and mission, the Environmental Protection Agency’s rolled out a new agency-wide acquisition rule requiring that any employee responsible for securing a meeting facility should evaluate the venue against a 14-point environmental checklist.

The following 14 points comprise the EPA’s acquisition rule that gives priority to hotels and conference centers that can demonstrate environmental progress and achievement. The National Conference Center is proud to measure its own environmental efforts against the EPA’s list.

EPA 14-Point Checklist

1. Do you have a recycling program? If so, please describe.

Yes. Recycling receptacles are placed throughout the building. Also, every office has a recycling box under the desk. Over 3 tons of paper was recycled for “Shredding Day” in 2008. A total of 85 tons of recycling was completed during calendar year 2009 with single stream recycling processes in place. The National Conference Center recycles glass, plastic, aluminum, metal, wood, cardboard, paper, and old appliances (TV’s, Computers, clocks, phones)

Recycling of guest name badge clips is available. Name badges are made of paper, without the plastic sleeves to minimize waste.

Full-service reproduction services are available to “burn” CD-ROM’s of handouts and meeting materials to save on paper usage. Back-to-back duplex copying services are available at the business center. USB drives are available for purchase to encourage electronic file sharing and minimize printing.

Electronic brochures are available and a comprehensive website to avoid mailing excess paper information to attendees.

2. Do you have a linen/towel reuse option that is communicated to guests?

Yes. We have an active linen/towel reuse program established. This is communicated to the guests via small information cards that are located in every guest room. Additionally, The National

Conference Center is a completely non-smoking facility within the buildings, which assists us with reducing the amount of extra cleaning and laundering associated with the former smoking rooms/areas of the building.

3. Do guests have easy access to public transportation or shuttle services at your facility?

Yes. The National Conference Center provides shuttle service to and from the airport and local shopping centers and attractions. Our newer shuttle buses run on Bio-Diesel fuel during the warmer months. Whenever possible, we try to use the smaller buses or the van when taking small groups of people to limit the effects on the environment. Public transportation is available in the Leesburg area and they will service the conference center when requested.

4. Are lights and air conditioning turned off when rooms are not in use? If so, how do you ensure this?

Yes. There is a sensor unit in each guestroom that tracks periods of inactivity so the HVAC will not run when guests are not in the room. In addition, the housekeepers are trained to conserve energy whenever possible and turn off lights and TV's in the guestrooms after they are finished servicing the room. Meeting rooms also contain sensors, in addition to the property being managed on a timed energy savings program in general. The meeting rooms contain motion sensors that control the lighting. They also contain programmable thermostats that reduce the run time of the meeting room HVAC units.

NCC uses energy-efficient light bulbs. In fact, 2680 standard bulbs were replaced with energy-efficient CFL's during 2009.

5. Do you provide bulk dispensers or reusable containers for beverages, food and condiments?

Yes. Bulk dispensers for condiments, salad dressings, etc are used in the dining room. The break stations feature bulk snacks in large glass containers rather than individual packages. Beverages in both the dining room and break areas are dispensed in bulk via fountain soda machines, bulk dispensers for milk, ice tea, juice, coffee, etc. This minimizes waste of aluminum cans, milk cartons and glass. The dining room is setup with buffet-style services so guests may take selections and quantities they desire to eliminate excess waste of pre-plated meals.

6. Do you provide reusable serving utensils, napkins and tablecloths when food and beverages are served?

Yes. China, glassware and silverware are used for all dining in the dining room and during private banquets and receptions. Cloth napkins and tablecloths are used for all catering events.

7. Do you have an energy efficiency program? Please describe.

Yes. NCC is equipped with an automated cycling HVAC system for temperature control within each building. NCC also has a Waste Management Contract in place for Single Stream Recycling. Our diversion rate for recycled material was 19% in 2009.

An energy management program is in place to reduce consumption of electricity. NCC is equipped with the Johnson Control Metasys Extended Architecture, Energy Management System. It controls the lights and HVAC systems in many of the public areas throughout the campus. These systems are placed on a schedule in the energy management system that reduces their run time and saves energy. The Energy Management System also efficiently operates the Central Utility Plant. This saves a great deal of energy compared to operating the plant manually.

Lighting in the conference rooms are controlled by motion detectors. 85% of the lighting at the facility is fluorescent. And as mentioned above, 2680 standard bulbs were replaced with energy-efficient CFL's during 2009.

Increased efforts are ongoing to post additional permanent signage, to reduce need for temporary/disposable signage. All computers are Energy-Star compliant. And NCC continues to keep this as a purchasing requirement as machinery and equipment are updated.

8. Do you have a water conservation program? Please describe.

Yes. Low flow toilets and showers are in each guestroom. Each guestroom is also equipped with low flow aerators in each sink. This has greatly reduced our water consumption. The project is currently underway for all public restrooms, which will take three years to complete. We are also looking into sub-metering our non-potable water to reduce sewage and incorporate into our irrigation system.

9. Does your facility provide guests with paperless check-in & check-out? Yes.

10. Does your facility use recycled or recyclable products? Please describe.

Yes. The National Conference Center has received accolades for our recycling and procurement efforts. When necessary to use paper/plastic cups, takeout boxes, and flatware, The National Conference Center purchases biodegradable items (this is usually at the request of a customer). Recycled paper and stationary is also in use.

Our Housekeeping department uses green seal certified paper products and our Food Service uses 100% sustainable paper napkins.

A Green Seal certified company provides the new catering brochures and the majority of the contents are made up of 30% post consumable products.

11. Do you source food from local growers or take into account the growing practices of farmers that provide the food? Please describe.

Yes. The National Conference Center has recently begun purchasing produce from local growers and is expanding the program. We are also currently working on expanding the program to include bakeries, breweries and vineyards.

NCC participates in the Monterey Bay Seafood Watch Program and incorporates sustainable fish purchases into menus in the dining room.

We also participate in Fair Trade Coffee Purchase programs. Our Starbucks Organic and Café Estima are FT brands.

12. Do you use bio-based or biodegradable products, including bio-based cafeteria ware? Please describe.

Yes. NCC already purchases many biodegradable items including coffee cups, plastic cold drink cups, takeout food containers, cleaning, laundry and dish detergents, etc. We are constantly improving our efforts in this area as current stock runs out and we are able to purchase more environmentally friendly products. Styrofoam was totally eliminated from the property in 2008.

13. Do you provide training to your employees on these green initiatives? Please describe.

Yes. The National Conference Center holds All-Hands meetings to inform all employees of the green efforts. Employees with email are encouraged to place a tagline at the bottom of emails asking recipient to "consider the environment before printing this email".

Green initiatives have also been incorporated into the orientation process. ARAMARK has also developed an Environmental Service Philosophy Calendar.

This is all part of an ongoing effort to educate the staff on the efforts in these areas and encourage them to find ways to contribute. We also have an Environment Section in the weekly newsletter that goes out to all employees.

14. What other environmental initiatives have you undertaken, including any environment-related certifications you possess, EPA voluntary partnerships in which you participate, support of a green suppliers network, or other initiatives?

ARAMARK was awarded EPA's "Green Power Partnership" award for 2007 for exemplary green power procurement. The Green Power Leadership Club's minimum purchase requirements are 10 times the minimum purchase requirements for the Green Power Partnership. ARAMARK has joined this elite group of Green Power Partners who are demonstrating environmental leadership.

The National Conference Center received Green Seal's, "Green Seal Certification" for complying with or exceeding Green Seal's environmental standard for lodging properties. Our first certification was in 2005. NCC was recertified on December 2009 and upgraded to "Silver" status. We continue to maintain silver status today.

NCC also participates in "Earth Day" on an annual basis and dedicates efforts in a number of areas including the cleaning up of our 110-acre campus and picking up trash in the wooded areas and creek that run through our property.

We were nominated for the Washington Business Journal's Green Company in 2009 and 2010. NCC is part of the Loudoun County's Green Business Challenge the past two years as well.

We are a member of the Virginia Green Association and the International Association of conference Center (IACC) which requires a signed Code of Sustainability.

Our Director of Operations, Tim Fletcher, has been the Co-Chair of Environmental Stewardship for all ARAMARK Conference Centers the past two years implanting Green Thread Initiatives through many lines of business.