



THE ORIGINAL GREEN
SEAL OF APPROVAL
SINCE 1989

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding GS-33

Green Seal's Environmental Standard for Lodging Properties

Q: Our hotel is not completely compliant with the standard, can I still apply for certification?

A: Yes! While we ask that you meet 85-90% of the criteria at the time of your application, if there are a few requirements that you are not yet compliant with or that you are not sure of, we will work with you to bring the hotel into compliance with the standard. Once you are in the review process, be sure to schedule the on-site audit when you are fairly certain you have met all the requirements, as you have 120 days from the audit report to meet any corrective actions identified during the audit.

Q: We cannot meet the Silver level currently, but we want to become Bronze certified. Can we stay certified under the Bronze level?

A: You are allowed to stay certified under the bronze level of GS-33 for one year. At that time, you must move up to the Silver level or you will lose your certification. You cannot downgrade, that is, move from Silver level to Bronze level.

Q: We can not meet the Gold level currently, but we want to become Silver certified. Can we stay certified under the Silver level?

A: You may stay at the Silver level indefinitely as long as you continue to pass your annual monitoring audits. We encourage you to strive for the Gold level, but you may remain at Silver.

Q: We would like to only provide reusable food service items, but in some cases disposable items are necessary – is this ok?

A: We encourage the use of reusable cups, glasses, cutlery and plates, particularly in guest rooms and common areas. But, disposable items are allowed in bathrooms if breakage is a concern or by request, and also in to-go or takeaway instances. Disposables may be allowed for to-go purposes as long as there is a reusable option as well.

Q: Do we need to implement recycling for the operations of the hotel or for the guests as well?

A: Recycling needs to be implemented in both the front and back of the house.

Q: Some of our current lighting fixtures are not compliant with the standard, however these are new and we do not replace them yet – what do you recommend we do?

A: You are allowed a 5-year replacement schedule for lighting fixtures. You must have this schedule in place in order to be certified and progress on the lighting schedule will be checked as part of annual monitoring.

(Continued on back)

ENVIRONMENTAL
LEADERSHIP STANDARDS



CERTIFICATION FOR
PRODUCTS, SERVICES,
PROPERTIES & COMPANIES



PARTNERSHIPS IN
GREEN PURCHASING AND
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT



SUSTAINABILITY
RESEARCH & LIFE CYCLE
ANALYSIS



Q: In our lobby we have a large antique chandelier. We have looked at energy efficient light options but at this time nothing seems to work – what are we to do?

A: Historic or specialty light fixtures where there is no acceptable energy-efficient option may be exempted from the requirement, but you should continue to evaluate options as part of your purchasing policy.

Q: For amenities, do you recommend we install refillable shampoo/conditioner containers or the smallest practical size?

A: Many times refillable amenities are your best bet for cutting down on wasted amenities and reducing unnecessary packaging. But based on your operation you could use either refillable or single use bottles. However, if you choose to use amenity bottles, you must calculate the average guest length of stay to determine if the amenity bottle is the smallest practical size for the average guest length of stay. Also, the amenity bottles must be recyclable (either #1 PET or #2 HDPE). Unused amenities should also be donated to charity or recycled where available.

Q: Our faucets and showerheads are not yet compliant, what is the replacement schedule for this?

A: For these we allow a 2-year replacement schedule. You must have this schedule in place in order to be certified and progress on the replacement schedule will be checked as part of annual monitoring.

Q: What are we to do with any non-compliant paint?

A: It is best to recycle or donate any remaining non-compliant paint, or you can also dispose properly in accordance with the local, state and federal regulations. Check your local recycling facility on how to recycle leftover paint.

Q: What do we do with non-compliant paper products?

A: You are allowed to use up the remaining stock of non-compliant paper products (printing and writing, tissues, towels, and napkins). However you must identify the compliant paper products for future use and supply us with an invoice that shows the purchase of the compliant products.

Q: Am I required to compost to be certified?

A: Not necessarily. There is no composting requirement for the Bronze level. Food and yard waste composting is a requirement for the Silver and Gold levels *where it is cost-effective locally*. By cost-effective, we mean that the return on investment is three years or less. For Silver and Gold, we ask that you look into options for composting your food waste to see if there is a municipal composting facility in your area. If there are no composting facilities in your area you may want to look at other methods for reducing food waste, purchasing only what is needed to minimize the food waste, or use food compactors/food pulpers or food digesters, which should include a metric for calculating food reduction. If you can show that composting on-site is not cost-effective, we would ask that you continue to evaluate options for composting every year as part of annual monitoring. In terms of yard waste, you should ask your landscaper if they can compost your yard waste.

For more information regarding GS-33, please call Green Seal at (202)872-6400, email certification@greenseal.org or visit: http://greenseal.org/certification/standards/gs33_lodgingproperties.cfm