

Sustainability Tips

"With rising energy costs, utility bills can reach up to 25% of total operating costs for a dry cleaning facility."

– Minnesota Technical Assistance Program

In addition to preventing contamination, there are other steps a dry cleaning facility can take to make the business more environmentally friendly. These voluntary recommendations can help save time and money.

"Losses from steam systems account for roughly 35% of potential energy savings in dry cleaning."

– Business Energy Advisor

"Wastewater recovery is the most promising source of energy conservation."

– Laundry Today, 2004

ENERGY

For starters:

- Receive an energy audit.
- Measure energy use for baseline numbers.
- Set a goal for energy reduction.

Lighting:

- Retrofit incandescent bulbs with halogen par lamps or compact fluorescent lamps.
- Replace T-12 with T-8 fluorescent electric bulb lamps.
- Change 'EXIT' sign from incandescent bulbs to LED.
- Clean light bulbs regularly.
- Turn off lights when not in use.

Maintenance:

- Regularly maintain boilers, steam traps, chillers and air compressors.
- Turn off appliances and machinery when not in use.

Upgrades:

- Request 'Energy Star' for new equipment purchases.
- Use energy-saving thermal windows, insulation and roofing.
- Install programmable thermostats, sensors and timers.
- Insulate boilers, piping, steam traps, water heaters and solvent machinery.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Garment bags:

- Utilize and offer reusable garment bags.
- Switch to a biodegradable plastic garment bag or those made from 100% post-consumer waste.
- Purchase bags on a large roll rather than boxed.
- Use returned plastic bags as garbage liners or recycle them, check with the waste hauler about options.

Hangers:

- Reuse hangers.
- Implement a hanger recycling program.
- Invest in and offer customers eco-friendly hangers.

"3.5 billion wire hangers are discarded in the US annually, a steel equivalent of 60,000 cars."

– Chemical & Engineering News, 2007

Additionally:

- Donate unclaimed clothes to charity.
- Reuse clothing tags.

WATER

For starters:

- Recycle or reuse water whenever possible.
- Check for water leaks and insulate hot water lines.
- Turn off cooling units in cool weather.

Investments:

- Install low-flow aerators for sink faucets and toilets.
- Replace once-through water cooling systems with looped systems and invest in air cooled equipment.
- Purchase water-recycling or ozone equipment and tunnel washers when laundry volume is sufficient.

TRANSPORTATION

For starters:

- Keep tires properly inflated and check pressure often.
- Encourage carpooling and ride sharing and provide bike racks for employees.
- Plan trips for efficiency.

Investments:

- Evaluate opportunities to minimize material and product transportation impact.
- Buy from local suppliers when possible.
- Invest in more efficient vehicles.