

Our
20th
WasteSMART
partner!



The Driskill Hotel

Solid Waste Services started the WasteSMART program to recognize local businesses that reduce and recycle waste and buy recycled products...

The Story

Since a cattle baron built the Driskill Hotel in 1886, it has become a landmark in the heart of downtown Austin. The hotel's 80+ employees manage 189 guestrooms and suites and more than 18,000 square feet of meeting and event space. The Driskill's parent company, Destination Hotels & Resorts, has made a commitment to be innovative, active, and high profile with regards to sustainability, conservation, and eco-friendly business practices. As the Driskill incorporates local waste reduction and recycling recommendations, it has come to exemplify the long-standing passion that Austinites have for environmental protection.

How They Did It

The hotel management called the Solid Waste Services Waste Reduction Assistance Program (WRAP) for a review of their waste output.

Several main problems were identified:

- An inconsistent collection effort for non-sensitive mixed paper, including magazines, phone books, and catalogs
- A lack of capture bins for aluminum cans and plastic beverage
- An excess of plastic packaging and boxboard packaging from supply shipments

The WRAP program staff made the following recommendations:

- Reduce excess mail, catalogs and magazines
- Recycle additional materials
- Recycle during onsite events
- Educate and motivate employees
- Practice environmentally preferable purchasing
- Look at other City of Austin conservation programs for businesses
- Get recognition for waste reduction achievements

The Driskill implemented these recommendations in a variety of innovative ways. For example, an onsite Green Task Force was created with full management buy-in. The Task Force helps ensure that all associates are supporting the Destination Earth conservation plan, which was initiated by Destination Earth incorporates new benchmarks for a series of environmental initiatives, both on the corporate level and at individual properties.

Additionally, the hotel "greened" their operations by:

- Using specially marked dumpsters that accept glass and cardboard.
- Posting 'Recycle Right' information sheets throughout the hotel and break areas to instill green practices.

The Driskill Hotel

- Replacing any disposable dishes, flatware, and cups in the hotel with reusable, washable items.
- Reducing plastic bottle waste by using filtered water stations and reusable mugs and tumblers.
- Recycling toner cartridges through the manufacturer.
- Installing separate recycle boxes for aluminum cans and plastic beverage bottles.
- Recycling light bulbs.
- Diverting all glass to the bar area for recycling.
- Reusing wood delivery pallets whenever possible.

Destination Hotels & Resorts and the Driskill recognizes that management, staff and guests all benefit from and desire a healthy and sustainable environment. The hotel has also shown that it's possible to achieve that goal without compromising their superior guest experience.