

# Events, Conferences & Meetings



Each year, thousands of gatherings like conferences, meetings and general “get-togethers” are hosted on and off campus. You can make your meetings green by using recycled materials, reusing items, and/or reducing materials. By doing this, you’ll conserve energy, reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions and save money. Plus, you’ll influence change both on and off campus by demonstrating the benefits of green events and meetings to participants, organizers and suppliers.

## Green Meeting Checklist

This checklist offers sustainable actions you can adopt to green your event or meeting.

### Logistics & Planning

- Leverage **video or teleconferencing tools** to reduce travel involved while planning your event/meeting.
- **Reduce your paper use** by using an electronic registration process and completing all billing and receipt distribution online. You can also limit paper handouts by distributing documents electronically.
- You can also use **recycled paper name cards** and reusable plastic name card-holders. Reuse or recycle them when you’re done.
- Purchase or make **green thank-you gifts** (e.g. charity donations, art made from recycled glass, locally-made crafts, etc.)
- **Purchase carbon offsets** from a reputable source.
- Rent signage or **create signage materials that can be repurposed or reused** at other meetings/events.

## Did you know?

Traditional offices account for the most lighting-based energy use and related greenhouse gas emissions in Alberta (at 35 per cent). Educational services followed at 21 per cent.

–Whole Building  
Design Guide

- **Use erasable boards, blackboards or slides** instead of paper flip charts. If you must use paper flip charts, buy recyclable newsprint with recycled content.
- **Purchase products that use little to no packaging,** or have recycled content packaging.

## Accommodation

- Encourage overnight guests to **reuse linens and towels.**
- Encourage overnight guests to stay in a **Green Key certified hotel.**
- Choose accommodation options in **close proximity to the venue.**

## Communication

- **Send invites and other communication electronically** to cut down on the use of paper. If it is necessary to print, use **recycled content, third-party certified paper.** Remember to ask for that FSC logo to be included on the printed product. Also, print on both sides of all paper.
- **Communicate green initiatives to participants well in advance** by providing them information on what is being done and how they can help you reduce the environmental impact of your event (e.g. bring their own bag, water bottle, lanyard, etc.).

## Exhibits

- **Provide a collection point for cardboard and paper** in exhibit areas.
- **Discourage the use of giveaways;** many of these items go unused and are thrown away. Consider door-prizes instead.
- Provide visitors with **reusable pockets, file folders or cloth bags** to keep their things together.

## Venue

- **Turn off unnecessary lighting and equipment** and use only what you need.
- **Encourage participants to use recycling stations** in event/meeting areas by ensuring the appropriate recycling, composting and waste bins are present and highly visible. Reminders and clear signage can make it easier for people to remember how to dispose of their waste properly.

## Did you know?

UAlberta's Lister Conference Centre and Guest Suites earned a rating of "3 Green Keys" as part of the Green Key Eco-Rating program.

The Green Key Program is the first of its kind to rank, certify and inspect hotels and resorts across North America based on their commitment to sustainable "green" operations.

## Transportation

- **Encourage and promote alternative travel methods** to and from the event.
- Encourage participants to use the **Edmonton Transit System** and provide information about route planning.
- **Enable and provide incentives for carpooling** or ride-share solutions through [carpool.ca](http://carpool.ca). You can also coordinate shuttle services to and from the airport.

## Food & Beverage

- **Encourage attendees to bring their own reusable dishes** and provide reusable plates, cups, and utensils for those who cannot (see Sustain SU's reusable dish program). If you must use disposable dishes, explore compostable/biodegradable options. Provide recycled content or cloth napkins.
- **Explore sustainable food options** with Classic Fare Catering. Offer organic, seasonal, and/or locally grown food and even consider serving vegetarian or vegan friendly options, and meat dishes that have a lower carbon footprint, such as fish. Offer Fair Trade certified, shade grown coffee, tea, chocolate and cocoa. Reduce portion sizes to prevent food waste.
- **Plan food service needs** and reduce portion sizes to avoid unnecessary waste. Compost unused organics.

## Did you know?

A disposable lunch creates between four and eight ounces of waste that can be added up to as much as 100 pounds a year.

—The Green Book



## Green Events at the U of A

### Green Conferences Certification

In February 2013, the Office of Sustainability will be launching a **Green Space** program, which will include **Green Conferences** certification. Conferences and large events will be eligible to be recognized as bronze, silver, or green and gold certified based upon the completion of a series of sustainable actions like those shown above.

To request more information, please see this link:  
[bit.ly/greenspacesurvey](http://bit.ly/greenspacesurvey)

