**7 Facility Management Strategies to Practice ESG**

Written by OpenWorks

One of the most pressing challenges for building managers and [commercial cleaners](https://www.openworksweb.com/about-openworks/service-delivery) today is reducing their environmental impact while maintaining efficient operations. In fact, the built environment generates nearly 50% of all global carbon emissions. Therefore, facility managers and commercial cleaners have an excellent opportunity to choose their actions wisely to make a positive impact on sustainability.

With IFMA (International Facility Management Association) adopting an [ESG model](https://pages.ifma.org/esgfm) that highlights the environmental, social, and governance considerations of FM,  companies are feeling the pressure to adopt sustainable practices. By following an ESG model, all workers in the FM space can become good citizens regarding sustainability.

Here are seven commercial building management and commercial cleaning strategies you can take for a greener future:

**1. Lighting Control Systems: Shedding Light on the Environment**

Lighting control systems are a smart way to manage lighting in facilities, helping to reduce energy consumption and costs. These systems use sensors and timers to detect the presence of people and adjust the lighting accordingly.

This not only saves energy but also prolongs the life of light bulbs. When you do need to purchase new light bulbs, look for LEDs as they require less power to produce a high level of brightness for optimal employee working conditions, operate at a low temperature (keeping your AC bills lower), and last an average of 25,000 hours (meaning you get to take fewer trips up and down a ladder).

**2. Water Conservation: Not Just a Drop in the Bucket**

Water conservation is another critical aspect of facility management. Installing low-flow faucets and toilets, fixing leaks, and using drought-tolerant landscaping can reduce water usage and keep high-traffic rooms like kitchens and bathrooms hygienic.

Plus, an ominous puddle in the middle of a shared restroom is never a fun sight for employees or customers, and neither is a mosquito-ridden pond that forms in the front of a building after a rainstorm.

**3. Energy Management Systems: The Heart of the Matter**

Energy management systems monitor energy usage and help identify areas where energy is wasted outside of just simple lighting or water sensors. They can also automate HVAC systems and other equipment to reduce energy consumption, including seldom-used manufacturing equipment and power strips in vacant offices.

Energy management systems are at the core of sustainable facility management and can help organizations reduce their carbon footprint.

**4. Waste Reduction: The Great Purge**

Did you know reduce, reuse, and recycle aren’t *just*three R’s of sustainability but also go in order? You can begin your sustainable journey by reducing paper usage and the amount of waste sent to landfills by recycling and composting (while also reducing costs associated with waste disposal).

Be sure to check your city’s requirements for e-waste disposal and recycling, including batteries and electronics, as these items cannot go in standard trash or recycling bins.

**5. Sustainable Purchasing: One Man's Trash is Another Man's Treasure**

Sustainable purchasing starts with reducing what you need to buy, reusing what you can, and recycling what you cannot reuse (or buying products made from recycled materials). This includes everything from office supplies to furniture to cleaning products.

By choosing products that are made from recycled materials, have a low carbon footprint, or are produced by socially responsible companies, facility managers can reduce their organization's environmental impact and turn waste into valuable resources.

*Pro Tip:* If you have an excess amount of old furniture or electronics you no longer use, first look to donate them to a non-profit organization before throwing them into a dumpster. Some charities can even offer you a tax credit receipt in exchange – turning your trash into cash and helping a great cause along the way!

**6. Green Cleaning: Don’t Be Toxic**

Are you tired of harsh chemicals polluting your building and the environment? Ask your cleaning crew to switch to eco-friendly cleaning products and practices! When it comes to green cleaning, it's all about using cleaning products that are non-toxic and biodegradable.

Reduce water usage by using a spray bottle instead of a bucket and turn off the tap when you're not actively using it. And, when you’re done, the last thing you want to do is pour harmful substances down the drain where they can contaminate your local water supply. Instead, check with your local waste management facility for guidelines on properly disposing of hazardous waste. You can also use an eco-friendly drain cleaner or septic tank treatment to break down any residual chemicals in your plumbing safely.

**7. Renewable Energy: Here Comes the Sun**

Renewable energy, like solar and wind power, is becoming increasingly popular for facilities looking to reduce their carbon foot print. Solar panels can be installed on roofs, the ground, or even the tops of parking lots, while wind turbines can be installed on nearby land and can reduce your reliance on fossil fuels while saving your bottom line. Look for renewable energy rebates in your city, county, and state before you get started.

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In today's world, sustainability is no longer an option but a necessity. Organizations that do not take steps to reduce their environmental impact risk falling behind their competitors and losing out on business opportunities. By reducing energy and resource usage, facility managers and commercial cleaners can cut costs and improve their organization's bottom line. [Click here](https://www.openworksweb.com/about-openworks/contact) to learn how to open your own sustainability-focused commercial cleaning company or how OpenWorks can help your small business grow.