

ADA Guidelines for Sustainable Dental Practices

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Clinical context

These Guidelines are designed to assist ADA members to improve the sustainability of their dental practices and take into account the regulatory requirements of dental practice and the current voluntary ADA dental practice accreditation scheme. Many of these measures will also reduce the overheads of a dental practice.

Definitions

- SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT means making sure that the products and services purchased are as sustainable as possible, with the lowest environmental impact and most positive social results¹.

Clean Water

- Dental practices, where practicable, should install amalgam separators complying with the current edition of ISO11143 Dentistry – Amalgam separators, and continue to recycle waste amalgam in accordance with the ADA [Policy 6.11](#) Dental Amalgam Waste Management.
- Radiographic developing fluids should be collected for correct disposal.

Water Management

- Collect the water bills for the last year to benchmark a water usage audit.
- Place interpretive signs about water conservation in staff rooms, toilets and surgeries.
- Maintain and repair taps or fittings.
- Use a non-water-based approach to cleaning where possible.
- Retro-fit flow controllers to key usage areas.
- Install 4-, 5- or 6-star water efficient appliances where appropriate.
- Install water tanks for rainwater collection for non-potable usage (such as toilets and garden irrigation)

Recycling

- Contact the local council / state government agencies regarding its services in order to optimise recycling.
- Provide clearly identified recycling bins for paper/cardboard and other materials in appropriate areas.
- Replace where possible paper copies with digital versions of records, accounts and correspondence.
- Correctly dispose of batteries, electrical equipment, ink and toner cartridges (for refilling/recycling), mobile phones, computers collected for waste and mercury-containing light globes.
- Using a shredding service that recycles.
- Consider recycling unwanted metal instruments, in order that they can be reused for industrial metal.

¹ <https://www.undp.org/procurement/sustainable-procurement>

Reuse

- Paper in administration areas.
- Plastics containers, paper, shopping bags and boxes
- Reuse all single-sided paper after printing.

Reduction

- Improve the efficiency of material use, recycling and re-use of materials and products, and increase overall reduction in product demand.
- Implement a sustainable procurement plan to reduce practice order frequency and reduce materials entering the practice, by specifying recycled photocopy paper, unbleached toilet paper and recyclable cups. (Spittoon rinse cups are not recyclable).
- Investigate any claims of recycling, how products are manufactured, and where they originate from before purchasing.
- Achieve paper reduction via double-sided and grayscale copying and printing, electronic replacement of educational material, invoices, accounts, referral letters and other appropriate documents.
- Purchase stationery in bulk and order materials on a weekly or fortnightly basis in order to reduce packaging and transportation costs.
- Provide separate bins to collect organic (FOGO) waste. Examples include:
 - Food scraps bin in the staff common room
 - Non-soiled paper towel waste in bathrooms or clinical areas

Surgery and Laboratory

- Limit single-use items whenever it is possible to do so without adversely affecting patient safety or infection prevention and control standards. (see Policy item 6.4 above).
- Utilise re-useable face shields.
- Re-use laboratory and postal boxes.
- Update operating lights to LED.
- Use biodegradable cleaning agents.

Energy Efficiency

- Collect the last year's power invoices to benchmark an energy audit.
- Have a maintenance regimen for cleaning light fittings, reflectors, heaters and air conditioners.
- Introduce: computer monitor sleep time, heating/ cooling switch-off, standby and shut-down regimens.
- Plan for natural airflow and passive solar and shading strategies.
- Introduce de-lamping/re-lamping programs (for compact fluorescent & LED lights), movement sensor or timer lighting.
- Plan to maximise natural lighting, appropriate for the climatic zone.
- Reduce energy wastage via window coverings, draft proofing, double glazing and insulation.
- Use 4-, 5- or 6-star energy rated appliances e.g. LED computer screens.
- Retrofit insulation to reduce heating/cooling requirements.
- Draught proof the premise to reduce unnecessary air leaks.

Energy Renewables

- Hot Water: appropriately size hot water systems, and consider installing more efficient heat pumps or solar hot water units.

- Install Solar Panels
- Battery Storage in conjunction with Solar Panels.
- Time shift large loads such as hot water and heating and cooling to correspond with solar production.
- Disconnect gas connections in preference of all-electric appliances powered by renewables.

eMeasures

- When appropriate, use:
 - Digital scanning workflows
 - Digital imaging of radiographs and clinical photographs;
 - e-Newsletters; and
 - digital records.

Built Form

- Adopt very low energy building codes for new buildings and retrofit established buildings.
- Anticipate building climate-resilient health and sustainable infrastructure, technologies and services that can perform in a warmer, less predictable climate.

Transport

- Consider Electric or Hybrid vehicles for staff transportation.
- Encourage car-pooling, active transport and public transport for staff.
- Provide bike racks and end-of-trip facilities for staff/patients cycling to the practice.
- Provide EV charging infrastructure at your practice for staff and patients.
- Provide clear public transport instructions to patients to visit your practice.
- Where feasible, reduce lab and courier transport by streaming pickup times.
- Revise procurement practices to reduce the frequency of order deliveries.

Related resources

[ADA Policy Statement 6.21 – Dentistry and Sustainability](#)

Contribute to the development of ADA guidance to the profession

This Guideline has been developed by ADA expert committees. Feedback from the profession is welcome and may be submitted to contact@ada.org.au for consideration in future guideline development.