SITENV001A
Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices

Learner guide
Version 2

Training and Education Support
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**Topic 1  Current resources used in the workplace**

The growing concern for conservation and the wellbeing of our environment is now firmly established in the public arena. We are urged to engage in environmentally sustainable practices both inside and outside of our homes and within our workplace.

For those who work in the tourism, hospitality and events industry our workplace has a broad scope and dimension. The tourism, hospitality and event workplace can be an office, one of the various means of transportation, a hotel, a caravan park, a theme park or any one of countless man-made and natural attraction sites.

No matter what our workplace we have the responsibility of ensuring that we manage our own behaviour in our workplace in order to support and participate in environmentally sustainable practices.

In this first topic we will discuss how to identify current resource usage in the workplace and measure that resource usage in terms of appropriate practice.

### 1.1 Workplace environmental and resource efficiency issues

There is a great deal of literature and information available that can provide a basis for you to identify environmental and resource efficiency issues in your workplace. It is suggested that you research this literature, as it relates to your particular tourism, hospitality and events workplace. Prepare a checklist of all those factors that may be relevant, and formulate appropriate questions in order to obtain concise and incisive information. You will then be able to use the checklist as a tool to keep you focused on the task as you seek to identify issues.

The issues that arise in most workplaces are related to finding ways to minimise environmental risks such as waste and pollution and maximise the ability of the workplace to improve its environmental performance.

The management of waste is an issue in every tourism, hospitality and events workplace. The type and amount of waste will vary e.g. from paper in an office to the rubbish that results from an event. Each year we are witness to the massive clean-up that councils in Sydney need to perform after events such as the Christmas Day Event at Bondi Beach, the Big Day Out and Carols in the Domain.

The Waste Management Hierarchy can be utilised to guide and direct activities that are environmentally responsible. The Waste Management Hierarchy is a nationally and internationally accepted guide for prioritising waste management practices with the objective of achieving the optimal environmental outcome. It sets out the preferred order of waste management practices from the most preferred to the least preferred.
We can recycle or reuse, reduce or avoid altogether. According to the Hierarchy, reuse requires less energy than recycling. We have already established outlets for reuse and we can build upon these.

Reducing waste refers to designing waste out before it is created. For example we can design our product in such a way that we actually think about what we can cut out that would ultimately become waste. Perhaps we could cut out more of the paper used in producing office documents or prepare environmentally friendly food and survival packs for clients undertaking treks or walks, which participants will be required to purchase in lieu of taking their own supplies. Avoiding waste is the ultimate challenge – the highest point in the hierarchy.

In your workplace you will be seeking to identify environmental and resource issues as they apply in the particular tourism, hospitality and event context. You will be looking for evidence of efficient energy and water use, and the demonstrated support for and understanding of the factors that constitute environmentally efficient workplace practices. Of course, what you might actually identify is inefficient usage of resources.
Waste management hierarchy

Visit a Waste Management Hierarchy website such as:

http://www.wastenet.net.au/information/hierarchy

List the approaches identified under a waste management hierarchy and write a brief description of each.
1.2 Resources used in own work role

Having identified environmental and resource issues in the context of the workplace, and having gained some insight into the scope of these issues, it is now appropriate for you to conduct an assessment of the resources that are used by you in your work role and your own approach to environmental efficiency.

If you work in an office environment, you may consider such items as all paper, cardboard, glass and plastic containers, toner cartridges and mobile phones. What do you do when these are used? Do you order environmentally friendly resources? You might also consider electronics, fluorescent tubes, and food waste and so on and how the residue from these is disposed.

You will be asking whether the resources you use on a daily basis are being used as effectively as possible. Do you actually need all the materials and resources you use? Could the resources be replaced with recycled materials or other more eco-friendly systems? Could you change your work practice to reduce the use of materials and resources?

If you work in another tourism, hospitality and event industry workplace, the resources you use on a day-to-day basis may consist of the land, flora and fauna, the powering and maintenance of rides at an attraction or fair, the linen and napery in a hotel or the materials used to make exhibits for a trade show or other event.

In each of the above workplace examples there will be efficiencies that can be made to reduce waste. Exhibition material is an area of great wastage where stands and displays are made just for one event. Think of how this problem could be addressed by an event organisation in terms of the waste management hierarchy.
Choose a tourism, hospitality or event industry business and list the environmental issues which the business would need to consider if it were to claim to be an environmentally efficient workplace. Then choose a job role within that business and research the range of resources which could be used to participate in sustainable work practices.

SAMPLE
1.3 Measuring and documenting current usage of resources

By far the most useful ways to measure and document current resource usage is by observation and examination of related information and data.

Keeping track of resource usage is a task that many people practice in their home as an on-going activity. Until recently people checked their water, gas or electricity meters to ensure that they were being billed the correct amount by the utility provider. With the focus now on environmental sustainability and the ‘footprint’ that we leave, people still check their usage but do so to ensure they are not overusing resources as well as monitoring costs.

In your workplace you can often identify gaps in efficiency just by walking around and looking. For example, you might note that computers and other electrical equipment are not being turned off after use, or that waste is being dumped in the bin rather than in the recycling container. You too can keep track of resource usage by monitoring meters and checking invoices from utility suppliers. Many businesses now contract expert environmental consultants to come into the business to conduct a resource usage audit. Consultants prepare a very detailed report of resource use identifying positive practice and the gaps in efficiency that can be improved. Further they will suggest, and perhaps even arrange, training for staff and also provide information about industry benchmarks for the business to aspire to.

In the tourism, hospitality and events workplace that exists outside of an office, different ways of measuring resource usage will apply. Observation will still be a predominant method but to some extent you will need to rely on feedback from others. For example, the use of wildlife in Australia as a resource is significant given the range of outdoor activities that form part of the tourism product. Bird-watching, big game fishing, scuba-diving and outback tours are some of the major tourism uses of wildlife. Although these activities are generally considered non-consumptive it could be assumed that there is no waste, however, the negative impacts on breeding grounds and habitats, and the distorted behaviour of wildlife associated with artificial feeding causes differing kinds of environmental resource issues. In fact the impact upon our natural and wildlife resources causes some of them to disappear entirely. The ultimate waste!

Those local people and organisations that monitor the impacts of tourism, hospitality and events activities on the environment will be the most likely source of information on the sustainability of a region. An example of this can be seen in the careful attention that is now paid to the Bungle Bungles in the Purnulu National Park in Western Australia. When it was noted that the thin covering on these beehive shaped hills was beginning to wear and that the soil was blowing away, the parks and wildlife department responsible for their sustainability introduced rules governing the use of the Bungle Bungles for tourism, and set a limit on the number of people who could visit each year. In this way they can preserve this very valuable tourism resource.
Measurement and documentation

Choose your workplace or talk to a family member or colleague about their workplace and list the methods they use to measure and document current usage of resources.