



Overview of key environmental issues

Retail businesses impact on the environment in a variety of ways – either indirectly through the upstream activities of suppliers, or directly through utilities for heating, air conditioning, refrigeration and lighting. As customers come into contact with the business, there is potential for demonstrating your environmental credentials and having a significant influence on consumer behaviour through promoting greener products. Other important environmental issues affecting your sector include waste disposal (especially packaging), the leakage of refrigerant gases and water pollution (e.g. storing cleaning agents, run-off from car parks etc) and consumer impact through transport or product use.

Listed below are links to detailed information on the most relevant pieces of environmental legislation affecting your sector and essential 'Green Savings' to creating a greener, more profitable, retail business. A full report is available at <http://www.SurreyGreenSteps.com>

Legislation

Climate change agreements

The Climate Change Levy (CCL) is a tax on the use of energy in industry, commerce and the public sector. The Government permits an 80 percent discount from the CCL if certain targets for improving energy efficiency and carbon emissions¹ are met as part of a formal Climate Change Agreement with industry sectors or businesses. More information is available at: www.decc.gov.uk

CRC energy efficiency scheme

The CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC) is a mandatory carbon trading scheme for businesses who consume above a set threshold of energy. Participant's performance will be published in a league table. More information is available at: <http://www.decc.gov.uk>

Air conditioning

Air conditioning systems over a certain size must be inspected regularly by an accredited assessor. These inspections are designed to improve efficiency and reduce energy consumption, operating costs and carbon emissions for your system. For further information there is an explanatory guide which can be downloaded from the DCLG website (<http://www.communities.gov.uk>).

Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)

The WEEE Regulations aim to reduce the amount of electrical and electronic waste going to landfill and improve recovery and recycling rates. More information is available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

Packaging waste regulations

There are two pieces of legislation that affect business that handle significant amounts of packaging waste or that put packaging or packaged goods on the market. These laws are designed to minimise the amount of waste packaging generated at source and ensure that packaging can be reused, recovered or recycled. More information is available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

Waste batteries regulations

The Waste Batteries Regulations affect any business that uses, produces, supplies or disposes of batteries, as well as any business that manufactures or designs battery-powered products. The regulations aim to improve recycling rates. More information is available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

Landfill regulations

Certain wastes, such as tyres and some chemicals, must not be sent to landfill. More information is available at: <http://www.netregs.gov.uk>

Energy labelling on household appliances

If you manufacture, sell or hire out electrical appliances you must provide the energy efficiency rating of your products so that consumers can make better informed decisions. You must do this by clearly labelling your products. You must also display the product's energy consumption clearly. More information is available at: <http://www.nmo.bis.gov.uk/>

Food hygiene standards

There are several regulations that apply to all businesses in the food supply chain including caterers, primary producers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers. The regulations set out basic hygiene principles, focusing on how to identify and control food safety risks at each stage of the process of preparing and selling food. More information is available at: www.food.gov.uk.

Green Savings

Calculate your carbon footprint

You can only make informed decisions about where to target carbon reduction policies when you have a complete view of your organisation's emissions. Plenty of business-friendly, free, advice is available on creating a simple corporate carbon footprint – highly recommended is Defra's GHG Reporting Guidelines (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/>). This document explains in clear terms how you go about creating a footprint – as well as how to report the result and set emissions targets. To help you calculate your business carbon footprint to the Defra standard we you can use the free Footprinter tool: <http://www.footprinter.com/>

Implement an Environmental Management System

An environmental management system (EMS) supports your company's commitment to improving all aspects of its environmental impact. By adopting an Environmental Management System you will be in a position to reduce raw material, waste and energy costs, gain environmental credibility and be compliant with legislation. To encourage SMEs to adopt an Environmental Management System, Surrey County Council has licensed an e-learning package for use by Surrey SMEs. This can be accessed via the following link: [INSERT HERE](#)

Buy green

'Green procurement' is a process through which a business considers the environmental impact of the goods and services it buys – alongside financial value. Green procurement is a very effective method for highlighting environmental issues within an organisation – and also driving environmental improvement in the supply chain. By purchasing prudently, organisations can reduce waste and pollution, save materials, energy and money, and encourage sustainable patterns of behaviour. The unsustainable purchase of products (e.g. timber, travel) also has a high reputational risk and can be seen by stakeholders as unacceptable. Some green procurement 'quick wins' can be explored at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk>.

Become energy efficient

It doesn't capture the imagination like some environmental initiatives but energy efficiency measures can yield big savings on your fuel and electricity bills – even the simple ones. An important first step to becoming a more energy efficient business is to ensure someone in your organisation takes responsibility for monitoring energy use and pushing forward energy projects. This will require discussion with staff from across your business as their behaviour and day-to-day decisions will directly affect the energy demands of your business. Visit the Energy Savings Trust (<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk>) and Carbon Trust (<http://www.carbontrust.co.uk>) for more information on energy efficiency in business.

1. Note that the 2009 Pre-Budget Report announced that, from 1 April 2011, the discount from the CCL will be reduced from 80% to 65%.