



2026 VERIFIED™

RESPONSIBLE HOSPITALITY

WITH

Forbes ★★
TRAVEL GUIDE

Section Overviews | **2026**

Forbes ★★
TRAVEL GUIDE

Topics

VERIFIED™ Responsible Hospitality is comprised of topics related to:

Front Office

- » Digitalization
- » Sustainability Efforts Front Office
- » Responsible Materials Front Office
- » Transportation
- » Public Areas
- » Retail

Rooms

- » Housekeeping
- » Guest Room Sustainability Efforts
- » Sustainable Materials

Food & Beverage

- » Restaurants & Bars - Responsible Offerings
- » Restaurants & Bars - Responsible Materials
- » In-Room Dining
- » Meetings & Events

Responsible Practices

- » Responsible Practices

Fitness Center & Spa

- » Pool & Beach
- » Fitness Center & Spa

Responsible Engagement

- » Responsible Engagement
- » Guest Engagement

The Essentials

The following standards are key differentiators in a property's sustainability program. Meeting all of these essential standards is not required to earn the Responsible Hospitality badge, but the essential standards hold more weight in the overall scoring of the assessment. Additional guidance is provided with these questions on the platform.

THE ESSENTIALS

Topic: Responsible Practices | Section: Responsible Practices | Question: LED Lighting

90% of Front of House lighting is energy efficient. This includes Public Areas and Guest Rooms.

Topic: Responsible Practices | Section: Responsible Practices | Question: Solid Waste Management

Your property implements responsible solid waste management processes.

Topic: Responsible Practices | Section: Responsible Practices | Question: Food Waste Management

Your property has a food waste management plan.

Topic: Front Office | Section: Digitalization | Question: Paperless Check-in & Check-out

The check-in and check-out processes are free of paper unless required by law.

Topic: Rooms | Section: Housekeeping | Question: Housekeeping Linen Program

The hotel offers the opportunity for guests to participate in a Housekeeping Linen program, and this is communicated to guests.

Topic: Rooms | Section: Guest Room Sustainability Efforts | Question: Refillable Dispensers for Bathroom Amenities

The liquid soap, shampoo, conditioner and lotion are presented in refillable dispensers. Non-refillable dispensers are considered single-use products.

Topic: Food & Beverage | Section: Restaurants & Bars | Question: Filtered Water

Still and sparkling filtered tap water or locally sourced bottled water is automatically offered.

Topic: Food & Beverage | Section: Restaurants & Bars | Question: Reusable Drinkware

F&B venues are free of single-use plastic and bioplastic drinkware, containers and flatware, including takeaway options.

Topic: Responsible Engagement | Section: Responsible Engagement | Question: Support Local, National and International Sustainability Programs

Your property supports local, national or international charitable organizations focused on environmental protection/regeneration and/or social responsibility.

Responsible Practices

RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES

This section includes standards regarding energy efficiency and food waste reduction.

Your property should have in place:

- An energy efficiency program
- LED lighting and sensed lighting
- Solid and food waste management processes
- Communication of sustainability initiatives, such as on the property website

What you will need:

- Document showing your property's energy efficiency plan, including retrofitting, BMS, HVAC system, lighting, insulation, monitoring, renewable energy, etc.
- Document showing the type of lighting and percentage of LED and energy efficient lighting in:
 - Public areas (any guest-facing areas of the property)
 - Guest rooms
- Document indicating the locations of installed lighting sensors and timers
- Your property's 2025 solid waste management report with monthly statistics
- Your property's 2025 food waste management report with monthly statistics
- Link to your property's sustainability information on hotel website

Essential Standards:

- 90% of Front of House lighting is energy efficient. This includes Public Areas and Guest Rooms
- Your property implements responsible solid waste management processes
- Your property has a food waste management plan

Front Office

DIGITALIZATION

The following section covers standards that relate to eliminating paper products in traditionally paper-heavy interactions.

Specifically, we will be looking for ways digital options are being used for:

- Arrival and Departure
- In lieu of collateral such welcome letters, maps and property information

What you will need:

- Upload of digital arrival collateral
- Proof of Property Management System and electronic credit card payment processing
- SOP for check-in/check-out process

Essential Standard:

- The check-in/check-out processes are free of paper, unless required by law

SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

The following section includes standards that relate to promoting sustainability efforts at check in and offering digital options for Concierge and Front Office interactions.

This includes:

- Explaining sustainability programs at check in, such as linen program or support for a charitable organization
- Digital newspapers
- Digital collateral/apps for the concierge and sustainable printer settings

What you will need:

- SOPs explaining sustainability program(s) at check in and printer settings
- Upload (photo, QR code, PDF) of digital reading materials app

RESPONSIBLE MATERIALS

This section includes standards about the materials used for claim tickets, room keys and drinkware.

Key points:

- If printed items are unavoidable, they are on 100% recycled paper or FSC-certified paper
- Plastic is not used for any claim ticket or room key
- Water is provided in glass, aluminum or reusable containers

What you will need:

- Invoice for 100% recycled or FSC-certified paper. Pricing information may be redacted
- Photos of luggage and valet claim tickets, water (if provided), and room keys
- Supplier information for room keys

TRANSPORTATION

This section includes standards on hotel vehicles and the amenities they include as well as electric vehicle charging stations.

Key points:

- Electric or hybrid hotel transportation is provided or suggested
- Wi-Fi is available in vehicles and only digital reading materials are offered
- Electric vehicle charging stations are available
- Electric golf carts are used

What you will need:

- Upload of hybrid and/or electric car service offerings
- SOP for digital reading materials in vehicle
- Photo of electric vehicle chargers

PUBLIC AREAS

This section addresses amenities provided in public area restrooms or other public areas.

Key points:

- Towels are not wrapped in plastic; paper towels are not used
- Amenities, such as soap, shampoo and lotion, are sustainable and non-toxic
- Dispensers are refillable

What you will need:

- Photo of welcome towel (if provided)
- Certifications for non-toxic amenities (soap, shampoo, conditioner and lotion, if provided)
- Photos of towels or hand dryers in public restrooms and refillable dispensers in public

RETAIL

Key points:

- Items are responsibly sourced and support the local economy
- Protected species or artifacts are not sold at the property
- Plastic bags are not used for purchased items

What you will need:

- Vendor's Code of Conduct for retail offerings

Rooms

HOUSEKEEPING

This section covers standards that relate to the housekeeping linen program, cleaning products used and housekeeping SOP.

These standards look at how/if your property:

- Offers a linen program and communicates this to guests
- Avoids unnecessary energy usage and replenishment of amenities

What you will need:

- SOPs for housekeeping and communicating the linen policy
- Photo of linen policy
- Certifications for non-toxic cleaning supplies or specific brand if applicable

Essential Standard:

- The hotel offers the opportunity for guests to participate in a housekeeping linen program, and this is communicated to guests

GUEST ROOM SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

This section addresses energy-efficient appliances and HVAC, linens and amenities provided in the guest room, recycling bins in the room and water conservation.

Key points:

- Appropriate number of robes and slippers provided

- Bathroom amenity dispensers are refillable
- Products are non-toxic and eco-friendly
- Appliances and HVAC are energy efficient
- Low-flow showerheads and toilets are used

What you will need:

- SOP for guest room setup
- Photos of refillable dispensers in guest room bathroom and recycling bins in guest room
- Certifications for non-toxic amenities (soap, shampoo, conditioner and lotion)
- The liquid soap, shampoo, conditioner and lotion are presented in refillable dispensers. Non-refillable dispensers are considered single-use products.
- Certificates of energy efficiency for appliances and low-flow toilets and showers

SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

This section largely addresses the elimination of plastic and excessive packaging in the room and laundry service.

Plastics and excessive paper usage should be avoided for:

- Wastebaskets
- Laundry service
- Slippers
- Lining of drawers and shelves

What you will need:

- Photos of wastebaskets in the guest room, laundry presentations, laundry bag, interior of closet and drawers, slipper presentation, and minibar/coffee setup
- Photo of or invoice for 100% recycled or FSC-certified paper for laundry form

Food & Beverage

RESTAURANTS & BARS – RESPONSIBLE OFFERINGS

This section evaluates in depth the menu offerings at the F&B outlets on property.

Menu/Buffer items should include:

- Seasonal, locally sourced and/or organic options

- Healthy items that meet a variety of dietary restrictions
- Fair Trade options, such as coffee, tea, chocolate and vanilla
- Vegan and vegetarian dishes

What you will need:

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner menus for main restaurant with healthy, seasonal, organic and/or locally sourced items clearly marked
- Pool menu with vegan and vegetarian options clearly marked
- Juice menu or list of offerings indicating organic and seasonal ingredients
- Beverage menu or list of offerings indicating local sourcing for beers, wines and liquors and organic wines
- Upload of F&B policy regarding endangered species
- Photos or invoice for Fair Trade-certified items
- Photo of local filtered water brand or filtration system
- Photos of buffet presentations (if applicable)

Essential Standards:

- Still and sparkling filtered tap water or locally sourced bottled water is automatically offered

RESTAURANTS & BARS – RESPONSIBLE MATERIALS

These standards address the materials used for napkins, tablecloths, serviceware, straws and take-out containers.

Key points:

- Cloth napkins are used; tablecloths are avoided or made of sustainable material
- Reusable drinkware is used; no plastic
- Straws are available only upon request and sustainable, if used

What you will need:

- Photo(s) of table setups and specifications for cloth napkins, tablecloths and placemats
- Photo(s) of takeaway serviceware used in F&B venues
- SOP for providing straws
- Invoices for sustainable straws and 100% recycled or FSC-certified paper for menus (or upload QR code for menu if applicable)
- Certifications for non-toxic cleaning supplies or specific brand if applicable

Essential Standards:

- F&B venues are free of single-use plastic and bioplastic drinkware, containers and flatware, including takeaway options

IN-ROOM DINING

This section evaluates the menu offerings available for in-room dining.

Key points:

- Overall menu offerings and fruits and vegetables include seasonal, local and/or organic options
- Healthy choices are available and meet a variety of dietary restrictions
- Menu should be digital and a digital ordering software should be available

What you will need:

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner menus for in-room dining with healthy, seasonal, organic and/or locally sourced items clearly marked
- Invoices for 100% recycled or FSC-certified paper for menu (or upload QR code for menu if applicable)
- Photo of digital ordering device or software used

MEETINGS & EVENTS

The standards in this section address waste management, sustainable food and beverage offerings and programming for meetings and events on property.

Key points:

- Waste bins are separated into recycling and waste
- Tablecloths are not used
- Food and beverage offerings are sustainable, including local, organic, seasonal and/or healthy options
- Breakout sessions promote local area/culture/community

What you will need:

- Photo of wastebaskets for meetings and events
- Photo of buffet presentation
- Event menu(s) with organic, local and/or seasonal options clearly marked
- Document showing breakout sessions promoting local cuisine, culture and sites

- Document showing the promotion of communities/culture/heritage and participation in various events
-

Fitness Center & Spa

POOL & BEACH

This section covers standards related to pool area, including eliminating plastic, limiting towel usage, sustainable sun products and supporting environmental causes.

Key points:

- Plastic should not be used for drinkware
- Excessive towel usage should be avoided
- Sun products should be non-toxic and reef-safe
- Your property should support environmental causes

FITNESS CENTER & SPA

This section covers standards related to the fitness center and spa, including eliminating plastic and using refillable amenity dispensers.

Key points:

- No single-use plastic is used
- Water is provided in a refillable dispenser or from a filtered water system
- Amenities are in refillable dispensers

What you will need:

- Document with sustainable pool specifications
- Photo(s) of drinkware for pool/beach setting
- SOP for providing towels at the pool/beach
- Brand and ingredient list for sunscreen sold or provided at the pool/beach

Responsible Engagement

RESPONSIBLE ENGAGEMENT

This section addresses your hotel's support of charitable organizations, compliance with accessibility regulations and third-party certifications.

What we are looking for:

- Support for local, national and/or international organizations that benefit the environment and/or community
- Compliance with accessibility laws
- Certification by a GSTC-accredited or other third-party certifying body (see list of acceptable certifications)

What you will need:

- Website link to the sustainability program(s) your property supports
- Certificate of compliance with local, state, national laws and regulations regarding accessibility
- Training plan or SOP for accessibility training or certification from recognized training organization
- Certificate from approved third-party certification programs

Essential Standard:

- Your property supports local, national or international charitable organizations focused on environmental protection/regeneration and/or social responsibility

GUEST ENGAGEMENT

This section addresses guest engagement with your hotel's sustainability initiatives, ensuring they feel that they are making impact and that the property is authentically supporting the local community.

The questions in this section can only add points to the score - they will not negatively affect the overall score. You can think of these as "extra credit," or ways to take your property's sustainability strategy a step beyond.

We are looking for:

1. Donations to local charitable organizations with linen program savings and guest donations
2. Offering a carbon offset program to guests

What you will need:

- Records of linen policy information and savings. Receipt from the charitable organization receiving linen policy savings donation (does not need to include amounts). Link to charitable organization and use of the donation
- Receipt from the charitable organization receiving guest donations (does not need to include amounts). Link to charitable organization and use of the donation
- Document from the hotel or receipt from the carbon-offsetting charitable organization on a quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis, indicating how many guests chose that program



2026 VERIFIED™

RESPONSIBLE HOSPITALITY

WITH

Forbes ★★
TRAVEL GUIDE

Section Overviews | **2026**

Forbes ★★
TRAVEL GUIDE