

Towel & linen agreements

Washing towels and sheets every day, regardless of whether they need washing uses vast amounts of water, energy (to heat the water and dry the laundry) and detergent – potentially harmful to the environment.

Whilst providing clean towels and bed linen is integral to providing a quality service, many guests are happy to have their towels and sheets changed less frequently.

Linen reuse programmes can save a medium sized hotel on average around 22.7 cu metres of water and 150 litres of detergent a month.

South West Tourism and CoaST both have towel agreement cards for your use.

- If you are based in Cornwall visit the CoaST web site at <http://www.cstn.org.uk/>
- Businesses elsewhere in the region wishing to receive the 'Action of the Year Water' towel agreement cards please e-mail Neil Warren at nwarren@swtourism.org.uk or call on 01392 229582

Case Study: Primrose Valley hotel in Cornwall could wash up to 60 items a day when the hotel was full. This reduced to as few as 5 a day when they introduced a towel and linen programme.

Remember the idea of towel & linen agreements:

- IS NOT to save money at the expense of the quality of visitor experience.
- IS NOT to pressurise guests or make them feel guilty if they would prefer to have their towels and sheets changed automatically.
- IS to provide guests with an OPTION to choose to have them changed less frequently.

Quality Assurance Scheme requirements

Bed linen change frequency - unless '*where, as part of an environmental policy, guests are invited and agree to a less frequent change*'

- 1 & 2 Star – beds made daily; linen, including duvet covers (even if top sheet provided) changed at least once every week and for each new guest.
- 3 & 4 Star - beds made daily; linen, including duvet covers (even if top sheet provided) changed at least once every three days and for each new guest.
- 5 Star - beds made daily; linen, including duvet covers (even if top sheet provided) changed at least once every two days and for each new guest

Towel change frequency - unless '*where, as part of an environmental policy, guests are invited and agree to a less frequent change.*'

Hotels:

- All start ratings - daily

Guest Accommodation:

- 1 and 2 star – no specific requirement
- 3 and 4 star – Towels changed every three days
- 5 star – towels changed every two days

Caution:

- There must be a towel rail in the bathroom for guests to hang their towels for reuse on.
- If you do not currently change towels on a daily basis, using towel agreement cards could potentially increase the frequency of washing.

If you would also like to invite your guests to have their bed linen changed less frequently, we have prepared a sample wording for you to follow.

Sample wording for Towel Agreement

<p style="text-align: center;">Green View Hotel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Helping Greenshire's Environment</p> <p>As part of our commitment to the environment, we would welcome your co-operation in helping us to reduce unnecessary laundry and its associated environmental impacts.</p> <p>Should you require fresh towels, please leave your used towels in the shower or bath, and we will be more than happy to replace them.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Thank you for your help</p>

Sample wording for linen agreement – for businesses that do not usually change linen daily

<p>Like you, we take our responsibilities towards our environment seriously. Just imagine how many sheets are washed everyday in all the hotels throughout the world and the vast amount of washing powder needed which pollutes our water.</p> <p>You can help us cut down enormously on water, detergent and energy by following the simple formula below.</p> <p>At _____ (insert name of your establishment), bed linen is usually changed every _____ (insert here how often you change the sheets).</p> <p>However if you are happy to have your bed linen changed less frequently, please let us know at reception and we will give you a card to place on your bed when you would like to have your linen changed.</p> <p>Thank you for working with us to reduce our impact on _____ (insert your destination), beautiful environment.</p>

Sample wording for linen agreement – for businesses that usually change linen daily

Like you, we take our responsibilities towards our environment seriously. But just imagine how many sheets are washed everyday in all the hotels throughout the world and the vast amount of washing powder needed which pollutes our water.

You can help us cut down enormously on water, detergent and energy by following the simple formula below.

If you are happy too use your sheets for another day please place the card on your pillow and we will make your bed without changing the linen.

Thank you for working with us to reduce our impact on _____ (insert your county), beautiful environment.

What are you doing with the savings you've made?

Visitors are increasingly aware of the cost saving benefit for businesses and may consequently be a little cynical.

By demonstrating and communicating what else you are doing for the environment, this helps the visitor to see that it is not just a token gesture to save money. They are then much more likely to participate.

Some visitors have commented that it would be good to know where the money saved goes, so if you are making a contribution to charity or reinvesting in other environmental projects, mention this on the cards.