



Futouris

Tourismus. Gemeinsam. Zukunftsfähig.

SOP: Towel / Linen Reuse Programmes

Housekeeping,
Animation Team (Pool Towels), Spa and Fitness



Purpose: To reduce water, energy and chemical use – lowering costs and environmental impact by encouraging guests to reuse towels and linens where safe and appropriate, while maintaining high standards of hygiene and guest satisfaction.

Why this matters:

Towel and bed linen reuse programs in hotels are vital for reducing water, energy, and chemical use. Encouraging reuse lowers washing frequency, cutting utility costs and environmental impact. Such programs enhance sustainability and demonstrate responsible management.

Procedure



Step 1: Assess Current Practices

Data Collection:

- Pull laundry volume and cost reports (past 3–6 months).
- Note average number of towel/linen changes per occupied room night.
- Record pool-towel distribution and pickup counts.

Staff Interviews/Surveys:

- Ask housekeeping staff how often they change towels/linens by default.
- Gather ideas or concerns about reuse from front-desk and laundry teams.

Guest Feedback Review:

- Check guest satisfaction surveys for comments on linen/towel policies.
- Identify any past complaints (e.g., cleanliness, mildew, lack of fresh towels).

Step 2: Define Objectives & Targets

- Set SMART Goals, for example
 - Reduce daily laundry loads by 15% within 6 months
 - Increase towel-reuse participation to 50% of occupied rooms."
- Decide on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
 - Laundry loads per occupied room night.
 - Percentage of rooms showing "reuse" indicator.
 - Cost savings in water, energy, chemicals.
- Agree pilot launch date, mid-point review, full-rollout date.

Step 3: Develop Reuse Policy & Materials

- Consider how you will operate towel and linen changes. Will you allow guests to choose when they are changed, or will you implement a policy of changing them a set number of times per week? Perhaps towels will be at guest discretion and linens will be changed according to length of stay.
- Develop guest communication materials accordingly. If towel and linen changes are to take place at guest discretion, ensure communications are engaging and specific, rather than generic. For instance, replace vague statements like with clear, compelling information that resonates with guests.
- Ensure that instructions are clear on what you want your guests to do. **For example**
 - Hang towels for reuse
 - Leave towels on the floor/in the bath/in the washing basket for replacement.
 - Place this card on the bed if you wish to have your linens changed

Generic Message

Do you know how many litres of water are wasted daily just washing linens and towels?



Compelling Message

- 85% of our guests choose to reuse their towels.....
-
- "...join them in making a positive impact today."
-
- "...you can too by hanging yours up for reuse."
-
- "...opt to reuse and help us save water."
-
- "...contribute by indicating your preference."



IMPORTANT: Make sure guests have plenty of room to hang their towels to dry if you're encouraging them to reuse them. Towels need to be spread out properly so they can dry completely.

Reuse policy for pool and spa towels:

Pool Towels:

- Offer guests one pool towel upon arrival and exchange it when needed.
- To reduce the frequency of towel changes, implement specific exchange hours, such as between 10:00am to 12:00noon daily.
- Alternatively, a small fee for each towel change could be charged. Enhance this approach by donating the collected funds to a local water initiative, creating a positive experience for guests.
- Track number of towels each guest checks out (e.g., towel cards or tokens).
- Ensure sufficient drying space for pool towels on guest room balconies



Spa and fitness facilities:



- Consider a **“One-Towel”** Program and invite guests to “Take your pool towel into the spa or gym” by branding all pool towels with a spa/gym-friendly logo or colour stripe.
- Offer compact “gym wraps” or “sweat guards” (roughly 30×30 cm) to drape over machines or benches rather than full size towels. Gym wraps can be made from microfibre which are lighter to launder and quicker to dry.
- Implement a hand towel only policy for cardio workouts, small towels of 40 x 60cm would work for this.
- Ensure clean towels are readily available for guests that do wish to use them.

4

Step 4: Staff Training & Engagement

- Ensure that staff are clear on when full changes are mandatory. (e.g., after illness, if towels and linens are soiled, every third day)
- Emphasize to staff that when a guest hangs up their towel, even if it has light makeup or mascara marks, they are signaling that they would like to reuse it. Towels should only be replaced if they're heavily soiled. Honoring the guest's choice is the essence of true customer service.
- Avoid changing towels every day for VIP guests unless they have followed instructions and left the towels on the floor or in the bath/basket as prompted.
- Ensure that all customer-facing team members, particularly Guest Relations and Reception can clearly and confidently explain the towel and linen reuse policies, highlighting the environmental benefits rather than attributing it to management policies. If a guest still requests fresh towels or linens, provide them promptly and courteously to avoid unnecessary complaints. It can help to have a stock of towels at the reception area

Step 5: Implementation

If you are implementing a new or updated towel and linen reuse system it can help to implement a pilot first. This gives you time to identify any unexpected issues and rectify them prior to rolling out the new programme in full. Things to consider for a pilot include:

Logistics

- Which departments and roles will participate? (e.g., Housekeeping, Front Desk, laundry, Spa/Fitness attendants)
- What resources and support does each team need to execute the pilot smoothly? (training materials, quick-reference guides, dedicated collection bins/trolleys)
- Which floors, room types or guest segments will be included? (e.g., floors 2–4, suites only, spa-package guests)
- How long will the pilot run? (we recommend at least 4–6 weeks to gather meaningful data)
- What specific metrics will you capture?
 - Volume or weight of laundry processed (kg of towels/linens)
 - Occupancy and “reuse” participation rates per room
 - Staff satisfaction and confidence (end-of-pilot survey)
 - Guest feedback or complaints related to linen/towel service
- How and when will data be collected, recorded and reviewed? (daily laundry logs, weekly occupancy reports, mid-pilot check-in)
- Ensure that a baseline assessment of laundry volumes is undertaken so that impacts can be measured accurately.
- Review & Adjust procedures and communications accordingly prior to full roll out

Step 6: Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

- Implement a weekly laundry volume and reuse-rate report which should be analysed by management.
- Undertake a monthly KPI review with relevant department heads.
- Conduct random checks of guestrooms to verify adherence.
- Inspect pool-towel stations for signage and bins.
- Review guest satisfaction surveys
- Conduct refresher sessions every quarter or after any procedural change.