



Standard Specification for Evaluation and Selection of Onsite Offices for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows, and Conferences¹

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INTRODUCTION

This specification offers a way to address environmental sustainability in the meeting and event industry. It is a tool for event planners and suppliers to understand the attributes of an environmentally sustainable event. The goal in developing this specification is to establish common benchmarks for environmental performance in events for both planner and supplier sectors. This specification considers the creation of an environmentally sustainable event to be a partnership between planners and their suppliers. Each plays a critical role in the effort.

In this specification, options are addressed for minimizing the environmental impact of face-to-face events. The approach of this specification is to focus on measurable outcomes and policies for planners and suppliers. This maximizes the ability of businesses to select the methods best tailored to their needs to achieve benchmarks and measurable outcomes.

1. Scope

1.1 This specification delineates procedural requirements for establishing onsite offices in conjunction with meetings, events, trade shows, or conferences (hereafter, referred to as *events*) by planners and suppliers.

1.2 Establishing an onsite office is the practice of procuring and equipping planner event or working spaces used for operational purposes, within or nearby the venues.

1.3 This specification pertains to onsite offices established by the event organizers for use by the event's planner, staff, volunteers, sponsors, or vendors requiring temporary offices.

1.4 An environmentally sustainable office includes aspects of accommodations, communication and marketing materials, exhibits, food and beverage, venues, and transportation specifications. The specifications of these standards shall be visited and understood by planners and suppliers in order to effectively carry out the specifications of the onsite office standard.

1.5 There are nine specifications covering the following areas of meeting planning: destination selection, accommodations, food and beverage, audio visual, onsite

offices, communication and marketing materials, transportation, exhibits, and venues. Within each specification are eight categories of criteria: staff management policy, communications, waste management, energy, air quality, water, procurement, and community partners. Each category is further split into four progressive levels of achievement. Information within each specification is divided as follows: Main Body—Scope, Referenced Documents, Terminology, Planner Requirements for Level 1, Supplier Requirements for Level 1, and Keywords; Annexes—Planner Requirements for Levels 2 – 4 and Supplier Requirements for Levels 2 – 4.

1.6 All areas of performance under this specification may not be relevant for each event or for each facility or provider of event services. In some cases, an event planner would use this specification in conjunction with other specifications (for example, Specifications E2774, E2743) or this specification may be used individually. In other words, elements of an event may be separated and considered solely or added together and considered as a unit (for example, venues used individually versus transportation, accommodations, and destination selection used in conjunction). Furthermore, this specification applies separately to each supplier for an event. This means if multiple suppliers are used within the context of a single specification, each supplier shall individually meet the supplier requirements. To be considered an environmentally sustainable event at Level 1, all areas applicable to that event shall be achieved.

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1.7 If higher levels are achieved in some sections, the event can only be considered environmentally sustainable at the lowest level achieved.

1.8 The use of levels within this specification recognizes the path to environmentally sustainable meetings is a multi-stage effort. The idea behind the levels is to provide a coherent baseline for measuring environmental performance, to be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of more advanced planners, and to establish a performance path that encourages further environmental performance improvement. In addition, evolution of products and services to support events is expected, allowing additional advancements and underscoring the dynamic nature of environmental sustainability. This specification primarily focuses on environmental sustainability, while some aspects of economic and social sustainability are included recognizing the complete path toward overall sustainability.

1.9 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

D3960 Practice for Determining Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) Content of Paints and Related Coatings

E2114 Terminology for Sustainability Relative to the Performance of Buildings

E2743 Specification for Evaluation and Selection of Transportation for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows, and Conferences

E2774 Specification for Evaluation and Selection of Venues for Environmentally Sustainable Meetings, Events, Trade Shows, and Conferences

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *biodegradable, adj*—capable of decomposing under natural conditions into elements found in nature. **E2114**

3.1.2 *compostable, adj*—capable of undergoing biological decomposition in a compost site as part of an available program where facilities exist, such that the material breaks down into carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass, at a rate appropriate for such program.

3.1.3 *diversion rate, n*—the rate or percentage of waste materials diverted from traditional disposal such as landfills or incineration to be recycled, composted, or reused.

3.1.4 *environmentally preferable products, n*—products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.

3.1.4.1 *Discussion*—This comparison applies to raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, use, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal. These products may possess biodegradable, organic, reusable, recycled, or recyclable attributes.

3.1.5 *environmentally sustainable, adj*—environmental focus on components, functions and systems that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.1.6 *hazardous materials, n*—any material or combination of materials that because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics poses an unreasonable risk to the health and safety of persons and the environment, or both.

3.1.6.1 *Discussion*—Hazardous materials may require special handling during storage, manufacture, processing, packaging, use, disposal, or transportation due to one or more of the following characteristics: poisonous, explosive, chemically active, corrosive, toxic, or radioactive.

3.1.7 *local, adj*—relating to or applicable to a city or town or district rather than a larger area.

3.1.7.1 *Discussion*—The exact distance for purposes of sourcing goods (including food and beverage), services, and personnel will be determined by the planner and supplier, or both, and be based upon the event location adjusting for location size and season. No standard definition exists to define local, inherent in this specification is the philosophy to use sources geographically proximate to the event and be practical given wide dispersion of services and products across geographic areas.

3.1.8 *no-idling policy, n*—a written statement that sets limits on the maximum idling time for engines or motors of all vehicles.

3.1.9 *planner, n*—person whose job it is to oversee and arrange every aspect of an event; an employee or hired ad hoc by large companies, professional associations, or trade associations to plan, organize, implement, and control events, conventions, and other events.

3.1.9.1 *Discussion*—Planners may include professionals who work for government, association, corporate, or independent agencies. The planner is the buyer of event services.

3.1.10 *post-consumer, n*—refers to material that are reclaimed from products that have already served their intended end-use as consumer items.

3.1.10.1 *Discussion*—Waste from industrial processes is not considered post-consumer. Post-consumer materials are a subset of recovered materials.

3.1.11 *pre-consumer material, adj*—refers to material that are reclaimed from manufacturing and other industrial processes, and products which have not served their intended end-use as a consumer item.

3.1.11.1 *Discussion*—Pre-consumer materials include culls trimmer materials print overruns overissue publications and obsolete inventories. **E2114**

3.1.12 *recovered materials, n*—waste material and by-products which have been recovered or reclaimed from waste

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

stream, but such term does not include those materials and by-products generated from, and commonly used within, an original manufacturer process. **E2114**

3.1.13 *recycle, v*—recovering or reprocessing materials for use in the form of raw materials in the manufacture of new products other than fuel for producing heat or power by combustion. **E2114**

3.1.13.1 *Discussion*—The use of the word recycle used in this specification applies to planners and their suppliers which provide event products and services. Recycling, as defined, does not extend to the activities of the suppliers' vendors or suppliers.

3.1.14 *recycled content products, n*—products that contain pre-consumer or post-consumer materials as all or part of their feedstock. **E2114**

3.1.14.1 *Discussion*—Recycled-content products may contain some pre-consumer waste, some post-consumer waste or both. A product does not have to contain 100 % recovered materials to be considered “recycled,” but clearly the higher the percentage of recycled content, the greater the amount of waste that is diverted from disposal.

3.1.15 *request for proposal (RFP), n*—an invitation for suppliers, often through a bidding process, to submit a proposal on a specific commodity or service.

3.1.16 *stakeholder, n*—individuals, organizations or other entities that directly affect or are directly affected by the planning and execution of a specific meeting.

3.1.16.1 *Discussion*—Stakeholders in the event industry include but are not limited to: event organizer, event planner, surrounding community, convention and visitors bureau, labor unions, news media, government, attendees, hotels, airlines, maintenance personnel, material handlers, local transportation companies and warehouses, florists, photographers, security companies, medical facilities, registration companies, restaurants, gas stations, recycling facilities, utility companies, caterers, audio visual providers, printers, ad specialty brokers, laundries, grocery stores, farmers, fisheries, fisherman, pharmacies, and bakeries.

3.1.17 *sustainable development, n*—development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. **E2114**

3.1.18 *sustainability, n*—the maintenance of environmental, economic, and social components, functions, and systems for future generations. **E2114**

3.1.19 *supplier, n*—purveyor, provider, vendor, or contractor offering facilities, products, and services, or a combination thereof.

3.1.20 *volatile organic compounds (VOCs), n*—any organic compound that participates in atmospheric photochemical reactions. **D3960**

3.1.21 *waste, n*—discarded residue for disposal or recovery.

4. Level 1 Requirements

4.1 Planner Performance Requirements:

4.1.1 Staff Management Policy:

4.1.1.1 The planner shall have a written environmental sustainability policy for its organization, available for stakeholder review, documenting a vision, objectives and goals for sustainability that addresses all the applicable environmental characteristics as described in this specification (staff management policy, communications, waste management, energy, air quality, water, procurement, and community partners).

4.1.1.2 The planner shall have written environmental objectives and performance criteria related to the specific event that address all the applicable environmental characteristics as described in this specification (staff management policy, communications, waste management, energy, air quality, water, procurement, and community partners) related to the specific meeting, and include these objectives in the RFPs.

4.1.1.3 The planner shall designate one or more staff members to implement the environmental sustainability initiatives related to the onsite office components of the meeting.

4.1.1.4 The planner shall ensure a safe work environment in the onsite office, and disclose to staff and volunteers any potential health hazards that exist at or nearby the onsite office venue.

4.1.2 Communications:

4.1.2.1 The planner shall maintain records of all environmental efforts, and shall make those records available to stakeholders and for reference for planning future meetings.

4.1.2.2 The planner shall ensure all appropriate personnel are made aware of, and can communicate effectively, the environmental policy of both the planner and the supplier.

4.1.2.3 The planner shall have a mechanism in place for communicating with suppliers its requirements with respect to environmental sustainability.

4.1.3 Waste Management:

4.1.3.1 The planner shall include a clause in the RFP and the contract for the supplier's services requiring suppliers to meet a minimum of supplier Level 1 waste management practices and environmental performance outcome measures as defined within this specification and requiring the suppliers to assist the planner in reducing the amount of waste created and increasing the amount of waste diverted.

4.1.3.2 The planner shall reduce paper usage in the onsite office by implementing at least three of the following strategies: (1) using minimum 30 % post-consumer recycled content paper; (2) sending all staff documents electronically and having them electronically available in the office; (3) using one master staff binder in the onsite office; or (4) printing in double-sided print mode.

4.1.3.3 The planner shall plan food and beverage arrangements in collaboration with, and to precisely meet the needs of, all onsite office staff in order to minimize waste.

4.1.3.4 The planners shall have a comprehensive recycling or composting program within the onsite office for glass, paper, plastics, printer toner cartridges, electronics, light bulbs, and food waste. Food waste/compost shall be diverted to a food waste composting program that collects, sorts, transports, and appropriately processes the food waste/compost. Glass, paper, plastic, printer toner cartridges, electronics, and light bulbs shall be diverted to a recycling service.