

The EPIC Program: Stage I – Bars & Restaurants

The Treasure Island/Madeira Beach Chamber of Commerce has founded the Environmental Preservation Initiative for our Communities (EPIC). EPIC is in collaboration with the Surfrider Foundation's Rise Above Plastics Campaign to implement Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Business (OFB) Program. This OFB Program has been modified specifically for the Treasure Island/Madeira Beach communities in cooperation with City Mayors and business owners. Once EPIC's three stages are fully implemented, our communities will become a model for others and raise environmental awareness. This first stage will focus on bars and restaurants via the modified Surfrider OFB Program. Subsequent stages will target hotels and other businesses.

Bar and restaurant participation in the program is voluntary and aimed at reducing litter and the use of water, energy, and other resources. To participate in the program, individual businesses must meet the three base criteria and at least three of the optional criteria presented herein. Businesses meeting all criteria will be given a "premier" designation in the program. Program participation includes staff training and a business pledge of support.

In addition to the listed criteria, businesses are encouraged to propose additional sustainable practices for review. If the collaboration finds merit to the practice, the business will be given credit and the new criteria will be added to the list. Criteria may be updated on an annual basis and businesses in the program must continue to meet the criteria to maintain certification.

Program benefits include:

- Free to TI/MB Chamber members
- Attracting eco-aware customers
- Receiving recognition and marketing via a mobile app, the Treasure Island/Madeira Beach Chamber of Commerce and other websites, EPIC logos, and social media
- Inclusion in organized events such as bar crawls
- Pledge of participation to advertise that the participating business supports the program mission
- Staff education to ensure that the OFB Program criteria are upheld on a day-to-day basis. Training will be provided on the businesses' individual criteria including how and why they are met. Printed training materials will also be provided for staff manuals and made available to employees upon request.
- Advertisement of your business' best management practices to share how your business is meeting the OFB criteria.

Treasure Island / Madeira Beach OFB Program Criteria

Base Criteria:

1. No styrofoam
2. Plastic straws/stirrers/lids/bags/utensils only upon request
3. Proper recycling

Optional Criteria (3 minimum, or all 6 for premier designation):

1. Water conservation efforts
2. Discounts offered for reusables
3. Paper reduction practices
4. Sustainable menu options
5. Energy efficiency
6. Additional options

Criteria Descriptions:

1. No Styrofoam

Purpose: Styrofoam, or polystyrene, is a petroleum-based product containing styrene. Styrene is considered to be a probable toxin to human health and the environment. In addition, styrofoam is easily crushed, breaking into small pieces that are easily carried by water and wind, creating litter and marine debris. This debris is estimated to take more than 500 years to degrade in the environment.

How to meet this criteria: businesses using must replace all styrofoam products with material that is recycled, degradable, or compostable.

2. Plastic Straws, Stirrers, Lids, Utensils, & Bags Provided Only Upon Request

Purpose: Single use plastic items are wasteful, harmful to animals, and are often found littered, becoming marine debris. Plastic bags alone are the recognized as the #2 threat to ocean wildlife behind derelict fishing gear. Not all patrons ordering to-go food will require disposable utensils, as some will be taking their food home with them. In addition, while we have become accustomed to having straws and lids a provided with drinks, they are unnecessary and often go unmissed when not provided. Simply asking patrons whether they need an item helps reduce wastefulness.

How to meet this criteria: businesses must only provide a plastic straw, stirrer, lid, utensils, or bag to patrons that individually request one. If providing plastic items more frequently than requested, they must be biodegradable, compostable, or made of post-consumer recycled material. When providing plastic straws on request, do not use individually-wrapped straws.

3. Proper Recycling

Purpose: Proper recycling helps to ensure that items don't get littered and are diverted from the landfill to live a second life as something new. Often, businesses see a cost reduction from an offset of garbage disposal costs.

How to meet this criteria: Businesses must implement a thorough recycling program to include cardboard, glass, plastic, paper, and metals, unless determined infeasible by the collaborative entities. Recycling may be found to be infeasible for a business upon review of a waste diversion analysis provided free of charge by local recycling providers. If the analysis indicates there will be a significant increase in cost to the business or that enough space is not available, then this criteria may be waived. Please contact your local recycling provider to initiate the free waste analysis to determine if your business can save money by implementing a recycling program.

Optional Criteria Descriptions:

1. Water conservation efforts

Purpose: The Southwest Florida Water Management District estimates that restaurants use an average of 5,800 gallons of water per day. There are many simple strategies that restaurants and bars can implement to save water and money. The Sustainable Foodservice website contains a wealth of helpful information: <http://www.sustainablefoodservice.com/cat/water-efficiency.htm>.

How to meet this criteria: Businesses must ask patrons if they want water before providing it, as well as meet at least **three** of the sub-criteria listed below.

- Replace all nozzles with automatic shut-off spray nozzles, which can use as much as 4.5 gallons of water each minute, with low-volume nozzles using 2.0 gallons per minute.
- Replace all faucets with low-flow faucets, which use only 1.5 gallons per minute. In most cases, low-volume faucet aerators can be installed inexpensively when the entire faucet does not need replacing. Make timely repairs to leaking faucets.
- In restrooms, install toilet tank water displacement devices, such as toilet dams, bags, or weighted bottles or replace toilets with low-volume models. Toilets can use as much as 4.5 gallons per flush, while low-volume toilets use only 1.6 gallons per flush. Replace urinals with low-volume models. Urinals can use as much as 5 gallons per flush, while low-volume urinals use only 1 gallon per flush. Make timely repairs to leaking toilets.
- When landscaping, use drought-resistant vegetation and water only in the early mornings and evenings, as needed. Ensure that all water hoses have shut-off nozzles and that sprinklers are directing water only to landscape areas, and not to parking lots, sidewalks, or other paved areas. Consider using low-volume reclaimed water irrigation, such as a drip system.

- Install automatic shut-off all faucets, so that water does not flow unnecessarily.

2. Discounts offered for reusables

Purpose: By offering a small discount to customers that bring their own coffee mug, drink cup, utensils, to-go container, or reusable bag, businesses can make a large, positive impact on our beaches and get people thinking about source reduction.

How to meet this criteria: Advertise that patrons are encouraged to bring their own reusables. Provide a standard discount to patrons that provide their own reusable item. Discount amount is to be determined by the business.

3. Paper reduction practices

Purpose: While paper is a better alternative to plastic and Styrofoam materials, it is preferred that reusable items be used since single-use items require a significant amount of energy/water/land resources for manufacture and transport and quickly end up in the landfill or tossed aside as litter.

How to meet this criteria: businesses must comply with at least **four** of the following paper reduction practices.

- Switch to order bulk items with less packaging
- Offer digital receipts in lieu of paper ones
- Use electric hand dryers in the restrooms
- Do not provide disposable coasters, placemats, or table linen
- Only provide reusable napkins or post-consumer recycled paper napkins
- Provide reusable menus for patrons dining in
- Use only post-consumer recycled paper for office printers and change printer settings to print on both sides, when possible

4. Sustainable Menu Options:

Purpose: Organic food reduces the need for pesticides and other chemicals, which can drain into waterways and the ocean. Local food reduces the carbon footprint of your meal since it incurs less travel time. Offering vegetarian and vegan food options can reduce the impact of climate change, rainforest destruction, and pollution, while saving water and other precious resources. Many common seafood items are either over-fished or caught in ways that harm other animals and their ecosystem in the process. Often patrons will be willing to pay a little more for an item that is noted to be sustainably-sourced on the menu.

How to meet this criteria: Provide at least **three** organic, local, vegetarian/vegan, or sustainably-sourced seafood entrée options. For the purposes of this program, local foods will be considered as those sourced within the State of Florida. Sustainable seafood lists change with

time. Please refer to The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program found at <http://www.seafoodwatch.org/> for the latest recommendations. It is recommended that sustainable food options be noted on the menu to raise awareness among patrons.

5. Energy efficiency

Purpose: According to the Energy Information Administration, restaurants are the most energy intensive commercial buildings in the United States. Traditional methods of energy production pollute our environment. Refer to the Energy Star website for information on alternative energy-saving products and tips: www.energystar.gov/restaurants.

How to meet this criteria: Business achieving the energy efficiency criteria must complete **three** of the following:

- Use Energy Star appliances in the kitchen
- Upgrade the HVAC system and have it serviced annually.
- Install a programmable thermostat to improve efficiency. Replace the air filter monthly during periods of heavy usage.
- Change out incandescent bulbs with LEDs or Energy Star approved products.
- Install dimmers on restroom and dining areas. Lights do not need to be fully on during the day and using dimmers creates a more relaxed atmosphere.
- Install occupancy sensors on lights located in closets, restrooms, storage areas, offices, and break rooms. This is also helpful when employees have their hands full and cannot easily reach for the light switch.
- Purchase (or derive) at least 25% of your energy from renewable sources.

6. Additional options

Purpose: there are many additional measures that businesses can perform to reduce their impact on the environment. Below is a preliminary list of additional criteria.

How to meet this criteria: Businesses must comply with at least **four** of the following sub-criteria:

- Use only organic or biodegradable cleaning products
- Switch to non-disposable condiment packaging
- Provide outdoor cigarette butt disposal containers
- Provide bicycle racks
- Use only beer kegs and cans instead of single-use glass bottles
- Only provide carbonated beverages from a dispenser instead of individual single-use containers.
- Implement a food composting program
- Implement a waste oil reuse program

- Use only environmentally-friendly fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides both indoors and out
- Actively encourage staff to carpool, use public transportation, or walk/bicycle to work. Achieve at least 20% participation.
- Advertise in your storefront that your business provides free water bottle refills to the public to help encourage reusables.