



COVID-19 SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE

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GSN Planet is a non-profit trade association that provides education, resources, and events to inspire businesses to take action and implement sustainable and regenerative practices that support a threefold approach to wellbeing.

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PRODUCT SELECTION GUIDELINES

As GSN's Sustainability Task Force, we can lead our spa industry into sustainability. Regenerative practices are the only way to create future business and sustainability is truly the bridge to wellness. Spas are perfectly positioned to become the new wellness sites for a broader market and sustainable practices are the actual pathway to get there. Our industry can create wellness for guests, staff and the planet, by offering new experiences and products that lead us all, including mother earth, into wellness. Afterall, wellness is an integral part of a healthy planet.

There is no perfect product out there. Each business needs to determine what product fits in line with their values and their location, while still making sure the product serves its purpose. These purchasing guidelines are recommendations of things you should consider before purchasing any product and hopefully will serve as inspiration for brands to be more intentional about sustainability.

WHAT'S IN IT?

- » What are the raw materials used and its ingredients?
- » How were those ingredients sourced?
- » Are they biodegradable?
- » Are any of the ingredients toxic?

WHERE WAS IT MADE?

- » Where and under what conditions was it sourced/farmed?
- » What was the environmental impact of the process?
- » What were the working conditions?
- » How far did the product have to travel to get to you?

HOW WAS IT MADE?

- » How water and energy intensive is the production process?
- » How much waste does it produce? Is any chemical processing involved?
- » What are the byproducts of this process?
- » What pollutants does it release?
- » Does the manufacturing process leave any residues in the product?
- » What were the working conditions?
- » Does the company use slave or prison labor?

WHAT WAS THE ENVIRONMENTAL + SOCIAL IMPACT?

- » What is the impact on the natural environment, human health, and socio-cultural environment over the whole life cycle of the product (from the source to your spa to the end user and onward)?
- » What kind of packing materials do they use during the shipping process?
- » Can the packaging be recycled or reused?
- » Is the company owned by an underrepresented part of the population?

WHAT IS IT LEAVING BEHIND?

- » What kind of packaging was used?
- » Does the company have a box opt-out program?
- » Is it made of recycled, reusable, recyclable, or compostable material?
- » Can the product be reused or recycled when no longer in use?
- » Are its ingredients degradable?

COVID-19 SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

While there are some things to celebrate when it comes to the affect of the pandemic on the environment, it is essential that we are intentional about our purchasing now more than ever. Waste in some cities has more than quadrupled, with billions of pieces of PPE being improperly disposed of daily.

The goal with these guidelines are to help those within the spa industry to make informed decisions, so that we can inspire conscious consumerism among our staff and our guests, for the sake of the future of our planet.



BREATHE EASY, STAY HEALTHY

Air Quality + Health

- » Start with HVAC systems - more cost effective and offer an active method for helping reduce spread of viruses and bacteria.
- » Upgrade filter in HVAC system to a minimum of a MERV-13 (try to find a reusable filter that can be washed regularly).
- » Prioritizing air quality also helps keep employees healthy too!
- » Make sure air filters for rooms are be effective against viruses by getting Ultra-Fine HEPA Filter or at least a HEPA-13.
- » With room specific filters, make sure it can clear the air of the room between guests in a reasonable amount of time.



DISINFECT, DON'T POLLUTE

Cleaning, Sanitizing, + Disinfecting

- » Look to light and water technology for chemical disinfecting alternatives?
- » Is it EPA registered to protect against coronavirus?
- » Look at kill times: time is crucial in our industry... find something that works quickly.
- » Make sure it isn't corrosive (must be compatible with all surfaces).
- » Does the product offer training resources to make sure it is being used correctly?
- » Understand the difference between cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting.
- » What is the impact on waterways and air quality? What about human health? Is it a skin or respiratory irritant?
- » Is it biodegradable and environmentally neutral?
- » Are you prepared for having to do a full top to bottom disinfection if needed? Look into electrostatic foggers.
- » If using light, does it produce ozone or any other byproduct that could be dangerous to inhale?
- » Look into physical disinfectants like salt or silver ions that can even protect after use.
- » Consider sprays and washable, reusable towels rather than wipes (unless wipe cloths break down quickly).
- » Pay attention to ingredients in hand sanitizer. Many will dry out hands or are actually toxic.
- » Consider long term effects of potentially over sanitizing things on our health.

COVID-19 SPECIFIC GUIDELINES



PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

Mask, Gloves, + Face Shields

- » When purchasing, consider: effectiveness, safety (clean dyes and material), breathability and fit (for proper use), how many uses, disposal.
- » Set a recycling standard: partner with TerraCycle for single use? (Masks are not recyclable curbside)
- » Consider compostable options for masks.
- » Fabric face coverings with optional filter (like HEPA or PM 2.5) to reduce waste.
- » Is the material safe to breathe through? (No toxic off gassing): make sure filters don't have fiberglass
- » According to WHO, fabric face coverings are most effective if: inner layer is an absorbent material such as cotton, middle later of nonwoven material such as polypropylene and outer layer of non absorbent material such as polyester.



REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Offset What You Can't! Alternatives to Single-Use Plastic

- » Choose glassware over single use, and ensure proper disinfection with extremely hot water and/or UV.
- » For individually wrapped items, choose products with compostable or recyclable wrappers.
- » If you must use bottled water, find brands that use plant based plastics or maybe even compostable option.
- » Make sure your local municipality is still recycling (some facilities in US have shut down and are sending recyclables to landfill).
- » Encourage guests to bring their own water bottle to fill at a touchless station.



UNIFORMS, LINENS, + SOFT SURFACES

- » Consider ozone laundry sanitization system to save electricity and eliminate harsh chemicals.
- » Consider antimicrobial fabrics (silver threading, bamboo, etc.), but also consider how often they need to be replaced.
- » If fabrics use microfiber, install a filter to prevent synthetics from going into the ocean.