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## More Hotels Offering 'Sneeze-Free' Rooms

**January 18, 2011** — In the past few years, scores of hotels around the world have transferred to more environmentally friendly cleaning products because of guest concerns and allergen sensitivities.

Now, many hotels are taking things a step further. Along with using green cleaning products, they are:

- Selecting fragrance-free detergents to wash linens
- Installing mattress and pillow protectors
- Designing carpetless rooms
- Providing chemical- and fragrance-free bath products
- Making sure windows can be opened wide.

The trend was noted in a 2010 survey conducted by the American Hotel and Lodging Association. According to the report, 38 percent of the hotels surveyed offer some type of allergy or "sneeze-free" room, up from 14 percent two years ago.

According to Jim Strong, co-owner of Strong Travel Services, Dallas, TX, many hotels have offered some type of allergy-free room in the past, "but there has been a noticeable increase in requests in recent years."

Mike Sawchuk, vice president of Enviro-Solutions, a green chemical manufacturer, says the number of allergy sufferers has gone up substantially since the 1970s.

"It was 30-plus years ago that indoor air quality first became a major issue in hotels and other facilities," he says. "Today, as much as half the population is sensitive to at least one common allergen, many of which are airborne."

Sawchuk believes allergy-, sneeze-free hotel guest rooms are part of a movement that started with nonsmoking rooms.

"People have just become increasingly concerned about the air they breathe and, as far as hotels go, it appears they are even willing to pay extra to have a room with enhanced IAQ."

Sawchuk is referring to the fact that allergy-free rooms, in most cases, do come at a price. Most hotels charge US\$20 to \$30 extra per night for these rooms.



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"But for most people, it's worth the price," he adds. "They sleep better, feel better, and are more energized when IAQ is protected and they can breathe clean, allergy-free air."

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