

Restaurants: Menu for Energy Savings During Downtime

Summary: Temporarily closed or offering limited service? Follow this recipe to save energy and money during your downtime.

Is your business temporarily closed or offering limited service? It can be a difficult time, but you can make the most of it by finding ways to save energy and money, and improve your operations, during the downtime. Here's some food for thought.

Take comfort

You can waste a lot of energy keeping empty spaces comfortable. Raise or lower the thermostat (depending on outdoor conditions) to minimize HVAC energy use. Consider installing smart programmable thermostats, which come with advanced features, such as remote control.

Cool off refrigeration

Refrigeration is a big energy expense for foodservice facilities. Consolidate food from multiple walk-in coolers or freezers into one unit. This allows you to shut off power to the empty units, significantly reducing your energy consumption.

Clean cooking equipment

Carbon and grease buildup makes cooking equipment work harder, consuming more energy. Although cleaning equipment is a daily task, now is the time to take a deep dive, thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing all the equipment in your entire kitchen. You'll save energy and create a healthier and more comfortable workspace for your kitchen staff.

Put out the flames

Pilot lights on idle cooking appliances and water heating equipment will continue to burn and use natural gas. Save energy by turning off pilot lights on any equipment that will be out of use for an extended period of time.

Limit lighting

Turn off all lights in unoccupied spaces, except necessary security lighting. Install timers on security lights, and light sensors on outdoor lighting, so they operate only when needed. Turn off selected parking lot lighting while maintaining security.

Focus on maintenance

Take the opportunity to perform maintenance on equipment around your facility to ensure efficient operation. For example, fix any water leaks and make sure refrigeration door gaskets are sealed correctly. Hire a qualified technician to clean and inspect your HVAC system.

With these measures, you'll not only reduce your operating costs, but you'll be better prepared to operate efficiently when your customers return.