

FEA's Guide to Cutting Equipment Costs:

The three-stage strategy: Train staff, protect equipment, invest in efficiency

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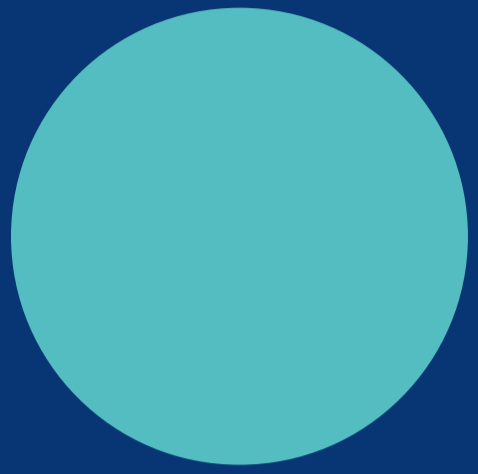


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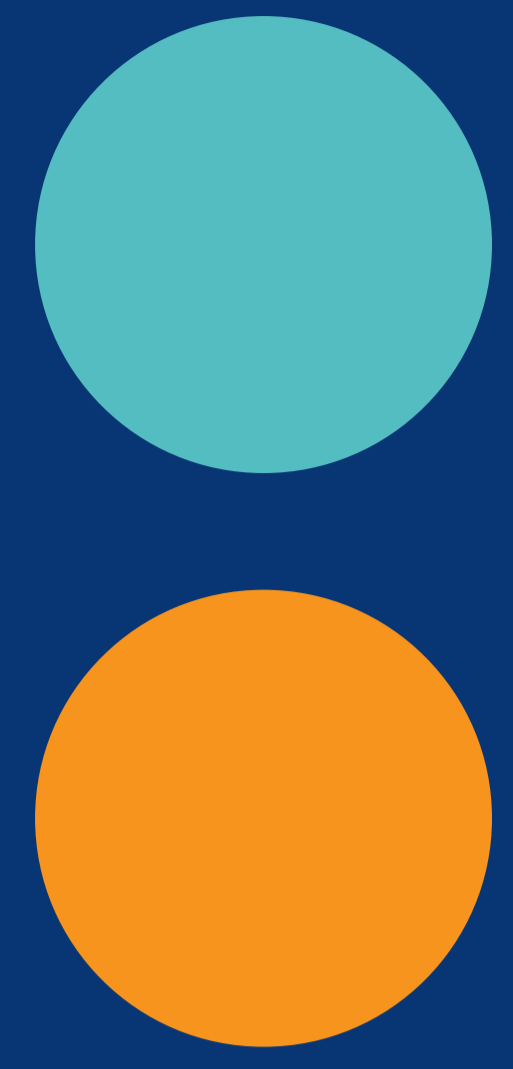


Can your foodservice equipment help you meet the challenges of the rising costs crisis?

FEA, the Foodservice Equipment Association, thinks it can – and offers advice on reducing running costs through better practices and utilising new technologies.



**We see three areas
that operators can
exploit to reduce
their costs**



They are training staff in best practice; servicing equipment regularly; and, when you need to buy new equipment, investing in new technologies.

Training

Training staff to operate equipment more efficiently can help cut costs. Back in 2012 the Carbon Trust's research into the contract catering market estimated that behaviour change in cooking could result in energy **savings of 43%**. The saving was an only slightly less **impressive 27%** for dishwashing. In fact,

There are some 'broad brush' areas that staff should adhere to in their day to day operations.

These include:

- Shut it: keep doors on fridges, ovens and other appliances shut as much as possible. This will mean they use less energy to maintain their temperature. Also check on door gaskets - a worn or damaged gasket means the seal is compromised, so the equipment will use more power than it should.
- Fill it: always try to use each piece of equipment at full capacity, whether it be a refrigeration cabinet, a cooker or a dishwasher. Running these half empty is a waste of resources.
- Switch it off: if it doesn't need to be on, turn it off. This is especially true of cooking ranges - leaving gas or electric hobs on when no cooking is being done simply burns cash.

Protect equipment

Looking after equipment is the only way to keep it operating at peak efficiency – which in turn will minimise running costs. There are two parts to this. The first is day to day maintenance, which staff will need to carry out. This will cover areas like cleaning – for example, ensuring that any ventilation grills are free of dirt and dust. A blocked grill can have a huge impact on the energy consumption.

Again, many FEA members will be able to provide free advice, schedules and training resources detailing how their equipment should be looked after day-to-day.

The second part of looking after equipment is maintenance and servicing, which must be carried out regularly, by a professional and qualified engineer. The ideal service solution is a Planned Preventative

Maintenance contract, usually referred to as a PPM. An engineer will come out, typically a couple of times a year, and service your equipment. They can often assess if the equipment is installed and being operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and will offer advice on best practice. They may be able to see if a component is likely to fail in the near future

– hopefully preventing any breakdown. By minimising downtime and maximising operational efficiency, regular servicing will help you reduce running costs.

However, it's essential that you understand exactly what you are getting when you sign up for a PPM.

Preferably what's required is a thorough examination of the equipment, based on check lists for each appliance.

A full investigation and fix could take an hour. Some service providers may just offer a quick ten minute visual check, which will be much cheaper but may not provide the true meaning of a maintenance visit. Make sure you understand what level of service your provider is offering and the criteria they are working to for the price you are paying.

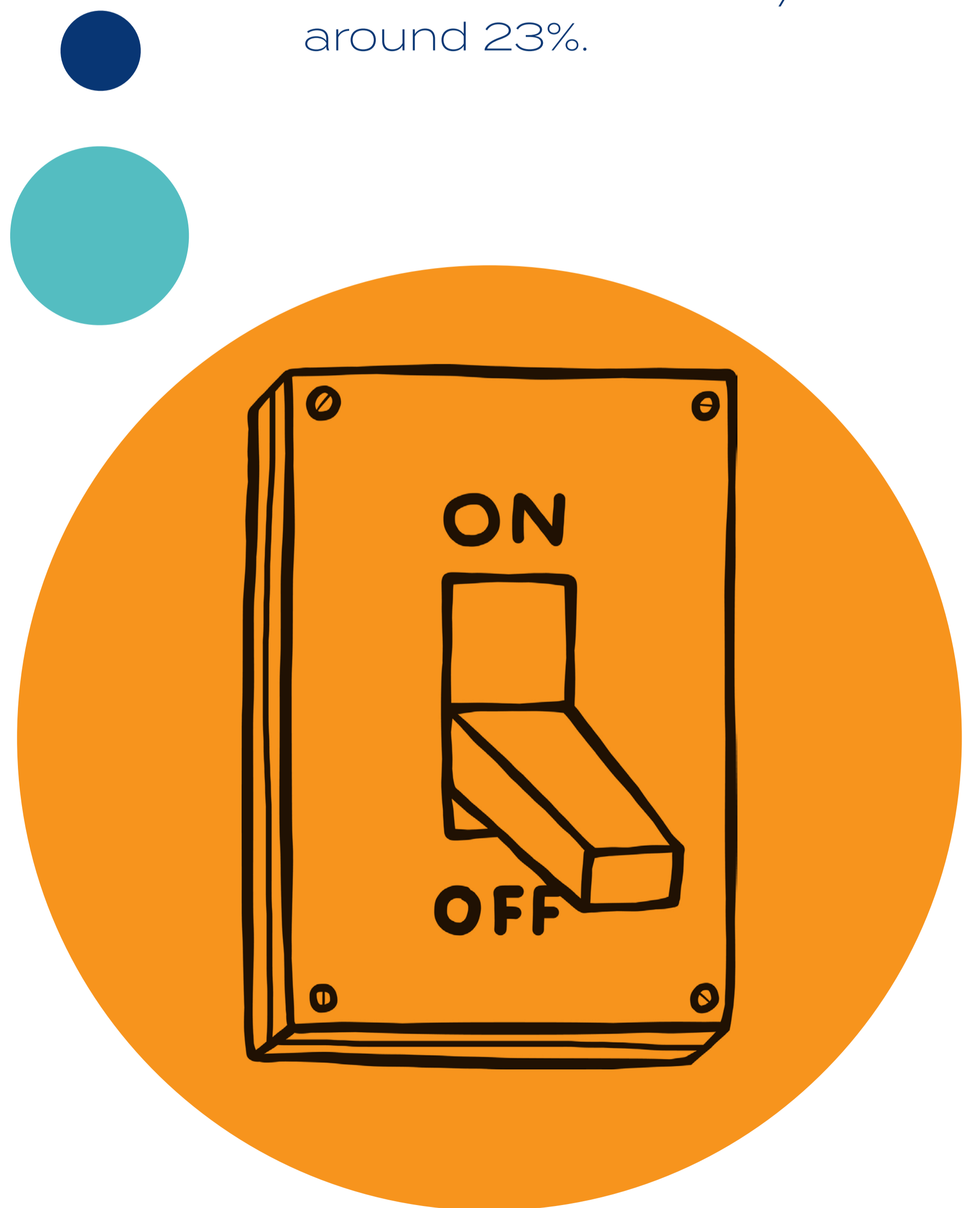
Some foodservice operators will reduce servicing costs by choosing different levels of maintenance for different types of equipment. As a thumb of rule, the more expensive, complex and crucial for operation a piece of equipment is, the more important it is to have a full preventative maintenance plan in place.

As well as keeping equipment operating at peak efficiency, looking after it properly can extend its working life significantly.

For example, one FEA service provider cites a chain that has invested in training and PPMs for its combi ovens, which are now reaching 15 years old and are used heavily every day, some with over 120,000 operation hours.

This despite the manufacturer suggesting that, with some care and maintenance, they would expect 30,000hrs of life cycle.

It's vital that the service provider really knows the equipment they are working on. One FEA member specialising in warewashing service reports that, by returning equipment to the manufacturer's standard every time their engineer visits, the number of reactive calls has been reduced by around 23%.



Investing in efficiency

Technology can help reduce running costs in a variety of ways – and not just in terms of reducing energy consumption. If you are looking to invest in new equipment, don't just plump for like-for-like. Manufacturers are well aware of the huge challenges facing foodservice operators and are developing technologies that can help overcome them – and reduce costs.



For example, food prep equipment that helps with portion control and thus minimises food waste. Or multifunctional cooking appliances that can increase productivity and thus help meet the challenge of staff shortages. Cooking systems that can reproduce chef's signature dish at the

touch of a screen – so even less skilled staff can cope. Beverage systems that can produce dozens of different drinks, at close-to-barista quality, and self-clean at the end of the day.

And then, of course, there is the massive issue of reducing energy costs. Modern

foodservice equipment is being developed to minimise running costs. For example, a dishwasher that uses less water will use less energy – because most of the energy consumed by a dishwasher is used to heat water. That's why manufacturers are developing systems that use less and



less water. Some of the advanced technologies can make a massive dent in energy consumption – even 50% or more. Similarly, a modern refrigerator consumes far less energy than its predecessors.

One leading manufacturer reckons that its fridges are typically 45% more efficient now than they were ten years ago. As energy prices go up, the return on investment of more efficient equipment is going to get faster and faster.

20% or less of the lifetime cost of equipment is the initial capital expenditure so, once installed, the appliance will carry on saving running costs throughout its service life.

Now is the time to invest, since there is the 130% Government Super Deduction for any new equipment that you buy (available until March 31 2023). It means you can invest in an enhanced, energy saving product without having to pay more than you would for the equivalent standard version.

The Foodservice Equipment Association (FEA) is the independent, authoritative voice of the foodservice equipment industry, representing nearly 200 companies who supply, service and maintain all types of commercial catering equipment – from utensils to full kitchen schemes. For more information on FEA visit [fea.org.uk](https://www.fea.org.uk)



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