Energy Saving Tips

From FEA, The Foodservice Equipment Association

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FEA Foodservice Equipment Association

Information Involvement Influence

Finding ways to reduce energy consumption has long been a priority in the foodservice industry. It is one of the biggest cost outlays, and as the cost of living crisis continues many businesses are increasing their efforts to cut their use of resources.

The Foodservice Equipment Association (FEA) is the largest organisation representing the equipment sector and it recently asked its members for their best energy saving tips and tricks, to help give you the edge in your efforts to reduce your costs.

General tips

One of the big takeaways from the advice offered by FEA members was the importance of taking advantage of technology and using it to make improvements to how you operate.

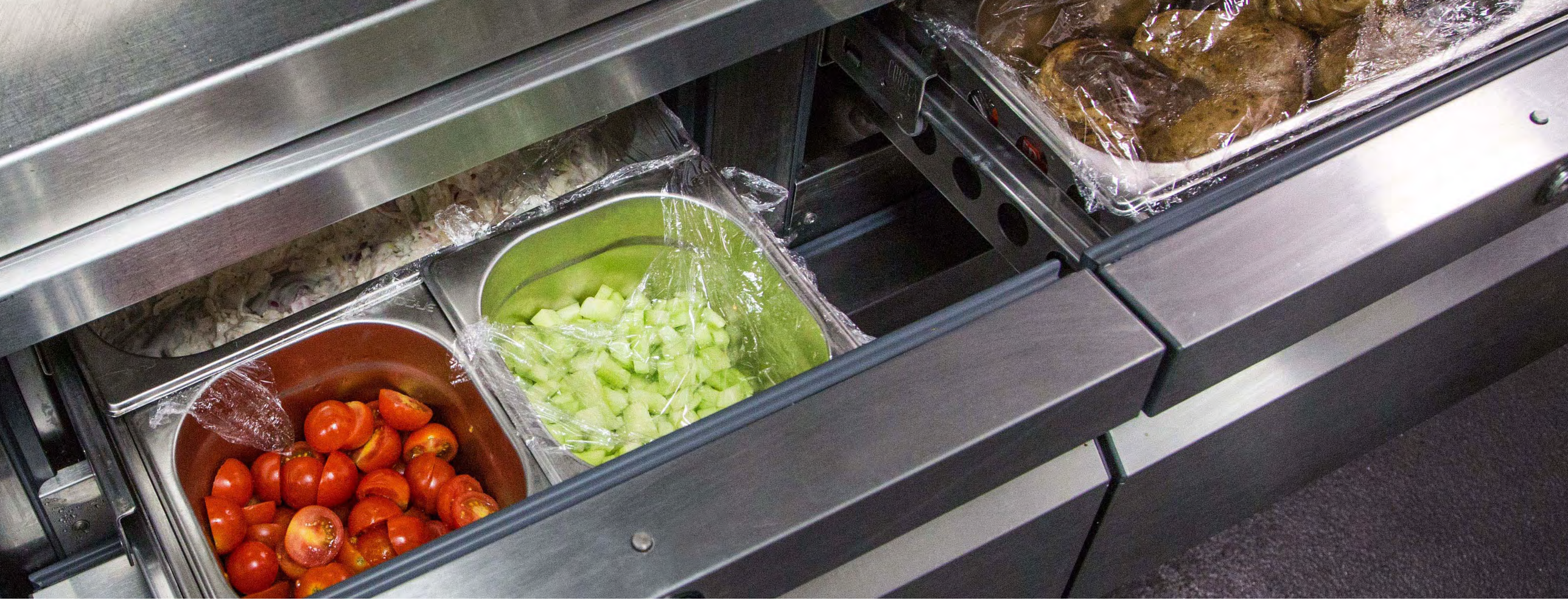
You've probably done some of the basics already, such as changing to energy efficient lightbulbs, these are constantly improving so you can benefit by updating to newer bulbs. It is important to look at capital equipment in the same way.

Smart energy monitors can be incredibly powerful tools for identifying unnecessary energy use. They can help you to get an overview of your energy consumption and how it changes through the day. It will take time and observation to get a clear picture of the effect of different pieces of equipment moving from being switched off to standby and active use but analysing the data it presents will help you discover areas that can be improved.

For example, only turn on equipment when you need it, rather than just switching it on first thing in the morning – of course some equipment should never be switched off, including refrigeration. A smart meter will give you a concrete indicator of exactly how much energy you're using throughout the day and indicate ways to reduce it whenever possible.

If you're using equipment that heats up water, like coffee machines, look for systems with heat exchangers. These will be able to reduce energy consumption by recycling the heat they produce during operation. This means that less energy is needed throughout the day to keep water at the desired temperature.

Keeping on top of maintenance tasks and cleaning will also help to ensure your equipment is running at peak efficiency. If equipment has air filters those in particular should be cleaned regularly.



Refrigeration

Making sure your refrigeration equipment is up for the task is vital. When looking for equipment you need to pay attention to the energy label, which will give information on the unit's energy consumption. These labels also show the climate class of the equipment, which tells you the ambient temperature and humidity conditions it can handle – these range from subnormal, which usually applies to freezers which can operate between 10 and 32°C up to tropical, with a tolerance for temperatures between 16-43°C

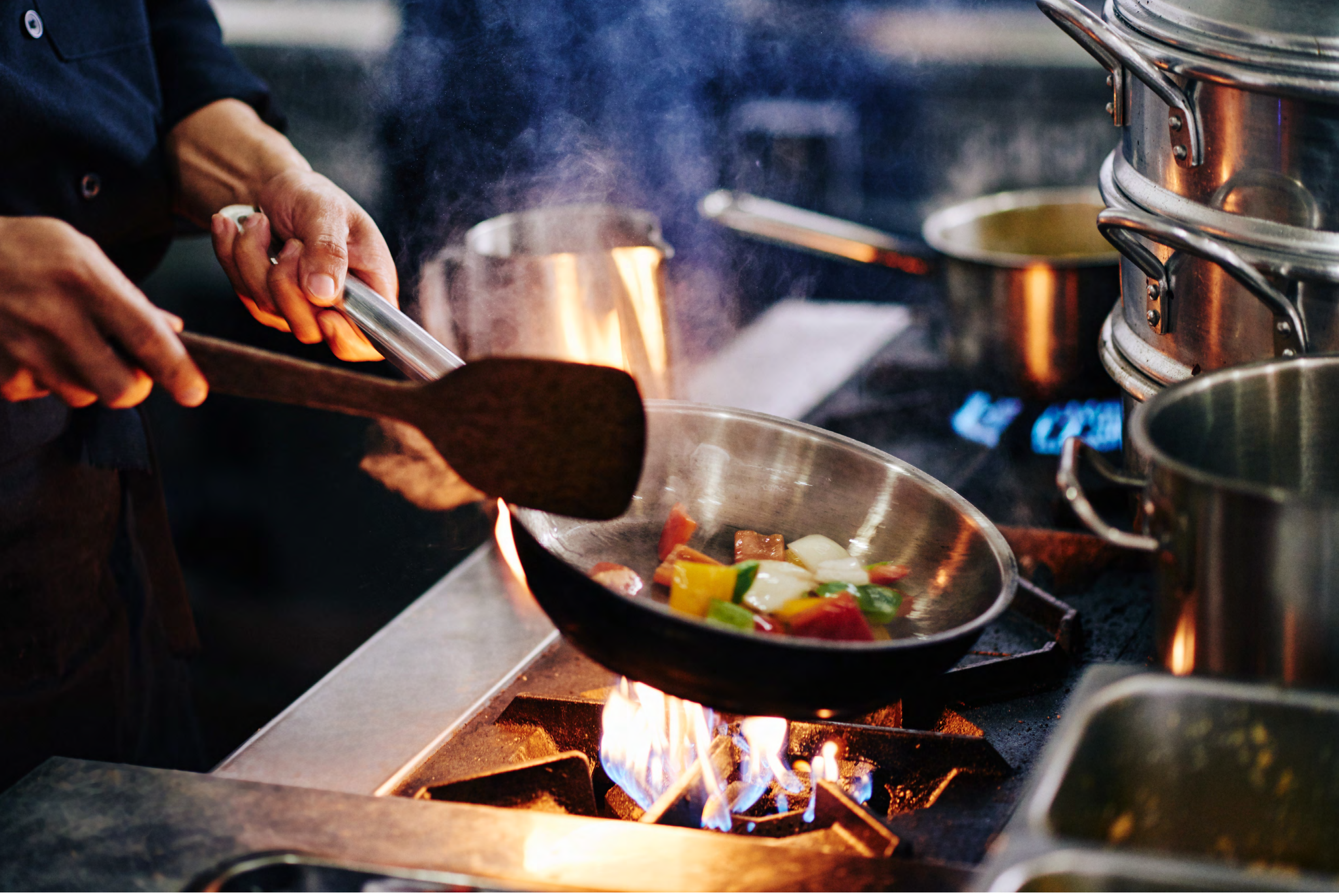
Even powerful professional refrigeration systems have their limits, and shouldn't be installed next to cooking equipment as the heat produced will cause them to use more energy to keep cool.

Chose equipment that helps your staff, too. Counter units, can improve kitchen workflow and thereby help your staff to carry out their tasks efficiently. Meanwhile drawer units can release less cold than door units when they're opened.

Filling your fridges with your daily consumables will reduce the amount of time you have to open up larger storage units or coldrooms. However, don't overfill them - blocked airways can compromise food safety and lead to higher energy consumption. Cardboard packaging should be removed first as it can slow down the cooling process.

It's also important to ensure that coldroom doors are kept closed whenever they're not being used, even if you're just nipping out to the van to collect more stuff! The longer they're open the more energy is used to maintain the operating temperature.

If condensation is forming in your fridge this is a sign that warm air is getting in somehow. A broken seal is a common culprit for this, so regularly check the seals for damage and get them replaced if they are.

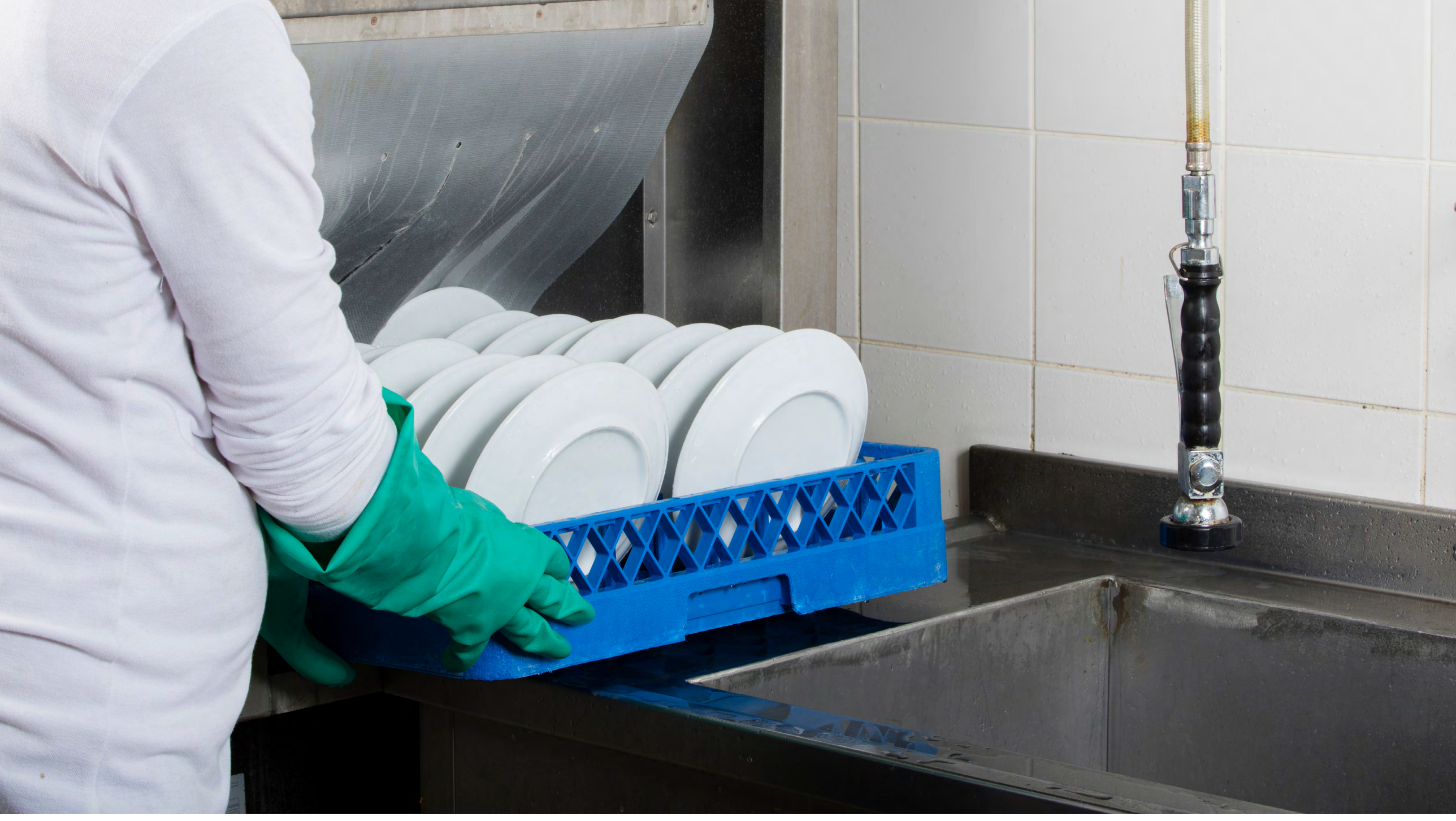


Cooking

Cooking food is energy intensive, and it can be a difficult area to cut down on. As well as the energy required to operate the cooking equipment itself, the additional energy costs of any extraction and ventilation systems are directly tied to how much they're used.

The simplest way to reduce energy consumption is to only use your prime cooking equipment when it's needed. Planning your daily activities and only switching on equipment as it's needed can have a huge effect on energy usage.

Replacing traditional equipment with multifunctional appliances and induction hobs can have a significant effect on energy use in the kitchen. Not just from having fewer appliances, but also because they are often faster and more efficient than standard equipment. What's more, they can have knock on effects, for example by reducing or even removing the need for additional systems like extraction.



Warewashing

Warewashers – and any piece of equipment that uses water – should be descaled at least twice a year, or more depending on water hardness. Limescale build up means more energy is required to heat the water. Water treatment systems are essential and reduce build up, protecting your machine. Even so, it will need regular descaling to keep it operating at peak efficiency.

Choosing modern equipment that can be used on demand will help save energy. Look for systems with fast heat up times, shorter wash cycles and those capable of rapid temperature changes. Always use the right chemicals for the machine too – it saves wasting energy by having to process things twice.

Got a foodservice equipment question?
Ask the experts fea.org.uk or #FEAuk

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**