

Energy Conservation Checklist for Bakeries

By Erin Brereton



Efforts bakeries make to conserve energy don't just benefit the environment. A 20 percent energy reduction can translate to an extra 1 percent of profit, according to [National Grid](#).

There are big changes bakeries can make, including swapping over to LED lights and rethinking sourcing, but monitoring everyday items can make a significant difference, too.

Bakery owners can set a few calendar reminders and use this checklist to regularly audit their businesses' energy use.

Every Month:

Change HVAC filters. HVAC systems consume the second-largest amount of energy in commercial

restaurants, according to [Energy Star](#), so they offer significant savings potential. “When you shake the filter, dust shouldn't fall off of it,” says Jeffrey Clark, director of the [National Restaurant Association's Conserve program](#).

Check freezers. Extremely dirty coils can increase a freezer or refrigerator's energy use by 50 percent, according to Clark.

Stop water leaks. Bakeries can save \$1,000 annually by tightening up dripping sinks, mop stations and dishwashing machines, according to Energy Star.

Every Quarter:

Examine overall energy use. Reducing an electric combination oven's idle time by just two hours a day, for example, can save up to \$800 a year; turning dipper wells down and making sure they're off when closed can save \$1,500 annually.

Clark recommends reviewing gas, electric and water bills at least quarterly to confirm if any higher usage corresponds with an increase in orders. “If there's a weird electricity spike, maybe you need to work with the staff to make sure everything is shut off at the appropriate time,” he says.

Tweak the temperature. Each 1-degree thermostat adjustment saves up to 5 percent on heating and cooling, according to the [Environmental Law & Policy Center](#) advocacy organization.

Plan for future green practices. [West Town Bakery](#) in Chicago typically slows down in November, partially due to a decline in wholesale orders, many of which come from schools.

Business often doesn't pick up again until mid-January, so the bakery uses the downtime to revisit [operations](#). For example, West Town may look at potential inefficiencies in delivery routes or the way certain recipes are scaled.

“During this time of year, we are able to take a step back and research new ways to increase quality or lower costs,” says co-owner Scott Weiner. “When it's a little slower, we can really take our time and look for ways to perfect our processes.”