A GREEN RESTAURANT GUIDE
Your Path to Sustainability and Efficiency
the greenest energy is
the energy you don’t use
GREEN RESTAURANT GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of several key sustainability areas in the food service environment. As a single guide could be written on each of these areas, this document concludes with a list of resources for additional information. The guide is neither all-inclusive nor meant to be set in stone. As with all areas of sustainability, the solutions and actions are multilayered and continuously evolving and vary by location. This guide is organized by broad categories, focusing primarily on inputs, operations and outputs. Areas addressed include responsible procurement, green buildings, energy conservation and waste stream management.

While reading, think about what practices you may be able to implement at your facility. If you do not manage a facility or are not directly involved in food service, use this information to understand and advance sustainable practices in the facilities where you work or visit. Food services are dependent upon a complex supply chain, involving a multitude of food producers and/or providers. Examples can include, but are not limited to: farmers, manufacturers, distributors, foodservice companies, equipment installers, maintenance services, waste management companies and consumers.
Responsible Procurement

Procurement covers not only the food and beverages purchased to support the dining operations, but also all of the supporting products and equipment necessary. When considering the implementation and expansion of a sustainable procurement plan, first take into account the products already being purchased. In developing a sustainable procurement plan, conduct a market assessment by considering consumer demand, product availability, food safety requirements, cost and logistics. By taking these steps, you may be able to responsibly procure cage-free eggs, organic produce, sustainable seafood, environmentally preferable disposables and more.

Local Purchasing

Decisions to purchase locally sourced food yield multiple benefits, including support of local economies, reduced environmental impact due to vehicle emissions for food transport, and reduced potential of food spoilage or damage during transportation. Local sourcing is specific to food that was produced and/or processed as close to the location of consumption as possible (Sustainable Food Laboratory, 2008).

If local sourcing is a key part of our client's goals, encourage menus to be developed using seasonal produce by contacting local producers to see what is available for each season. The chef can then develop a menu around local availability.

tailor the menu to local producers’ season
Food Safety
When sourcing local and organic produce from smaller farms, be sure to ask about sanitation, pest control practices and potable water testing practices. All growers, regardless of size, should follow Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), and manufacturers should follow Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). Check the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) audit verification program for compliance with GAP and GMP for fruits and vegetables. To find out more go to ams.usda.gov.\(^*\)

Consumer Disposable Products
The procurement of all support products, such as napkins and other disposable products, should be assessed for sustainable options. Polystyrene products and waxed cardboard are examples of products that should be avoided when better environmental choices are available. Examples of environmentally preferable products include, but are not limited to, products that contain recycled content (pre- and post-consumer content), contain renewable materials or are compostable.

Green Buildings
The building shell and systems within the building also impact the overall sustainability of the food service environment. A few key factors to consider when designing or redesigning a food service facility include: sustainable design, construction, operations and maintenance practices. When evaluating alternatives, remember that energy efficiency and energy conservation strategies are the most practical and cost effective sustainable practices to implement, compared to renewable energy strategies (IFMA 2009). As an entire paper could be written on this topic, several resources for further reading are recommended: ASHRAE Green Guide, BetterBricks website, United States Green Building website and the Whole Building Design Guide website.

The Energy Resource Center in Downey:
- Is recognized as an ENERGY STAR® Facility
- Earned LEED for New Construction v1.0 Certification in 2001
- Earned LEED for Existing Buildings v2.0 Certification in 2009

*This link takes you to a third-party site, which is not part of Southern California Gas Company.
Site Planning
When building dining facilities, efforts should be made to minimize the impact on the natural environment. These efforts can include, but are not limited to:
• Using the existing building footprint when possible.
• Restoring habitats disrupted during construction.
• Implementing environmentally focused storm water design.
• Reducing heat island effect.
• Minimizing light pollution.
• Providing access to mass transportation.

Water Efficiency
Developing a water conservation plan and purchasing water-efficient products reduce both operating costs and environmental impact. To develop a water conservation plan, start by verifying that the following practices are currently performed at the facility:
• Undertaking a periodic leak inspection program.
• Operating dishwashers only when full.
• Hand scraping food scraps.
• Using water-efficient toilets, low-flow urinals, pre-rinse valves, sink aerators and combination ovens.
• Using ENERGY STAR ice machines, steamers and dishwashers.

Building Materials
When purchasing building materials and products, research information on environmentally preferable products. A few things to look for include:
• Products with recycled content: Reduce the volume of raw materials that must be extracted from the environment.
• Use of rapidly renewable materials.
• Low-emitting materials: Reduce off-gassing of chemicals during construction and operation by using low volatile organic compound (VOC) adhesives, sealants, paints and carpets.
Energy Management

Restaurants and buildings with commercial kitchens consume 2.5 to 10 times more energy than other commercial buildings. A lot of money spent annually for energy in the commercial food service sector is wasted. The energy waste results from excess heat and noise generated from inefficient appliances, HVAC systems, lighting and refrigeration. Significant potential exists to improve the energy efficiency and sustainability of current practices in the food service environment. The ENERGY STAR program estimates that restaurants that strategically invest in operational practices can reduce utility costs from 10 percent to 30 percent, without sacrificing service, quality, style or comfort.¹

¹ ENERGY STAR, 2009

reduce energy consumption and the volume of makeup air for kitchen ventilation

Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems

HVAC systems provide heating, cooling and ventilation, offering a comfortable environment for employees and patrons. Specifying a high-efficiency HVAC system during design or renovations is important for equipment to run efficiently.

To reduce energy consumption and the volume of makeup air for kitchen ventilation, the following strategies are recommended:

• Use demand control ventilation for kitchen exhaust hoods and makeup air units, where appropriate.
• When installing kitchen exhaust hoods, select a UL-listed hood that meets the specific exhaust airflow requirements needed by the cookline. Selecting a properly sized hood will reduce the fan speed, reducing both energy use and cost (ASHRAE 2003).
• Minimize the use of island hoods by locating exhaust hoods near walls for more efficient capture of exhaust.
Lighting
The largest opportunity to make lighting more sustainable is to replace inefficient incandescent and first generation fluorescent lamps. For example, within walk-in refrigerators and freezers, replace incandescent lights with low-temperature compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) or light emitting diodes (LED). CFLs give off less heat, reducing the amount of heat the refrigerator needs to reject. CFLs or LEDs can also be used in the dining environment. However, if the dining environment requires subdued lighting, carefully select dimmable options. Additionally, fluorescent T12 lamps can be replaced with more efficient T8 or T5 lamps. To minimize energy consumption from lighting, all lamps can be connected to a lighting control system with shutdown schedules.

Windows
The heat loss or gain from windows can be reduced by applying window film on south- and west-facing windows in the dining environments that get a lot of sun. The window film will help reduce cooling costs, make dining environments more comfortable, and help prevent fading of carpet, chairs and furnishings.

Refrigeration Systems
Many small efforts can be made to improve the energy efficiency of refrigeration systems without replacing current appliances. Here are several tips to ensure your systems operate efficiently:
• If you don’t have strip curtains on walk-in refrigerators and freezers, you can spend more on energy costs to load your products while the doors are propped open.
• Replace worn door gaskets on walk-in coolers and freezers and make sure automatic door closers are functioning.
• Clean condenser coils monthly and check for the proper amount of refrigerant.
• Check for the need to insulate refrigerant suction lines.
• Keep evaporator fans in walk-in coolers and freezers free and clear of products.
• Make sure strip curtains are in good shape, and keep them down when loading the walk-in cooler.
• Don’t defrost while loading the refrigerator or freezer. Check the defrost time clock—make sure it is properly set.
Efficient Appliances

In most restaurants, the annual energy consumption required to produce food is greater than the energy required to heat and cool the building. Energy is used for cooking, food preparation, cleaning and dishwashing. Energy is also used for refrigeration, ventilation and many other applications. The type, model, age and how the appliance is used greatly impacts energy consumption. Efficient use of energy can reduce operation costs while having a positive environmental impact.

To improve operational efficiency without replacing current appliances, the following strategies can be used:

- Use the most efficient appliance available at your facility.
- Cook with the oven fully loaded when possible.
- Keep the lids closed on braising pans and kettles during periods of extended use. This practice will reduce energy consumption from braising by as much as 50 percent.
- Implement a startup/shutdown plan so that appliances are only operating when needed.
- Keep equipment maintained by repairing leaky gaskets, cleaning clogged burners, ensuring oven hinges are tight and calibrating thermostats without preheating more than necessary.

Making operational process changes can be significant. For example, cutting out only one hour each day of broiler on time can translate to a savings of around $450 annually. Although $450 might not seem like much at first, it could be huge when you think in terms of your profit margin. If a restaurant operates with a profit margin close to 5 percent, about $9,000 of sales is needed to earn $450. Therefore, every dollar saved through energy efficiency is a dollar of additional profit.

* ENERGY STAR, 2007
WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste Stream Management

Solid waste within the food service environment can be categorized as food, packaging and operating waste (IFMA 2009). The size and content of the waste stream in a food service environment is greatly impacted by the use of reusable or disposable dishes and flatware and the existence of recycling, composting and other waste management programs.

The quantity of food not consumed by the customer constitutes a large portion of waste in the food service environment. In fact, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), food waste is the number one least recycled material in the United States.

Reusable Ware

Using reusable dishes and flatware, combined with energy- and water-efficient dishwashers and environmentally preferable detergents is one option to reduce solid waste. When disposable flatware is required, compostable flatware is an alternate environmentally preferable option. However, compostable flatware must be directed to a commercial composting facility, as it will not degrade within a landfill environment. When making decisions about disposable flatware and dishware, be sure to consider products made from renewable materials, post-consumer content and products that are compostable.

ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

recycle unconsumed food and materials
Recycling Bottles, Containers and Paper Fibers

In 2011, people in the U.S. recycled and composted approximately 85 million tons of municipal solid waste (according to the EPA). This provides an annual benefit of more than 186 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions reduced, comparable to the annual (GHG) emissions from over 36 million passenger vehicles. Plastic, glass and aluminum beverage containers, and materials made with fibers such as paper and cardboard, are the most commonly recycled products in food service recycling programs. Check with your client, local agencies and waste haulers to determine which products can be recycled in your locale. Work with the custodial crew to review operational and training adjustments. Engage your customers in raising awareness and education.

Recycling Fryer Oil

Fryer oil from kitchens can be reprocessed and used for biodiesel, to generate on-site electricity, or in any diesel system including heating, automotive and trucking uses. In order for the fryer oil to be reprocessed, it must be collected and often stored on-site for a short period of time until it can be picked up. Fryer oil can be stored in 55-gallon (208 liter) drums, and up to 1,000-gallon (3,785 liter) containment units. The economics of disposing or reprocessing fryer oil is geographically dependent. Some locales currently have reprocessing facilities, and the foodservice company is paid to collect the fryer oil. In other locales, foodservice companies must pay to have the fryer oil removed.
Composting

Composting can also reduce the volume of the waste sent to the landfill. Similar to fryer oil reprocessing, opportunities for composting are dependent upon local jurisdictions, preference and the amount of space available. Before starting a composting program, be sure to determine restrictions and requirements in your locale. By planning and implementing a composting program in partnership with the facility management team, food service provider and municipality, you can minimize the pitfalls and increase the likelihood of a successful implementation.

Composting is a science, requiring the right proportions of air, water, organic waste and bulking agents for the decomposition to occur. When implementing a composting program, it is best to work with a municipality or other third party who is familiar with composting. If a company is being considered, the following tips are helpful:

- Food grinders can be used to increase the volume of compostable material.
- Composting can be put into practice in cold climates within greenhouses.
- Composting is not always an economical solution. Efforts to minimize waste are also discussed in the Case Studies section on Trayless Dining and Reusable To-Go Containers.

Ideas for Sustainability Leaders

Here are a few sustainable strategies that are being practiced by sustainability leaders.

- **Food Service Master Plan**: When developing a campus or other food service venue master plan, be sure planning efforts include locating food service locations near public transportation and walking paths.
- **Designing Facilities**: When designing food service facilities, work with USGBC LEED Accredited Professionals, chefs and financial planners to make conscious design decisions that will help reduce food waste and energy use.
- **Local Purchasing Policy**: Develop a food purchasing policy based upon local and regional capabilities. This will greatly assist in developing menus that focus on foods that align with mutually agreed-upon goals.
- **Meet Your Farmer Day**: To educate patrons about local produce and farming, set up a “Meet Your Farmer Day” within the dining room. The patrons will have the opportunity to learn about where food comes from and the farmer will likely benefit from increased income.
- **Janitorial “Policing”**: Provide small, friendly notification cards for janitorial staff to help educate employees when they place recyclable materials into waste baskets instead of recycling bins.
Green Tips Summary

Keep equipment maintained.
Top 10 Energy Conservation Tips

WHETHER THROUGH PURCHASING ENERGY-EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT OR CHANGING A FEW HABITS, SAVING ENERGY IN THE COMMERCIAL KITCHEN CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS TURNING OUT THE LIGHTS.

1 Buy energy-efficient equipment. Equipment that bears the California Energy Wise Owl logo earns California Rebates when you buy qualified equipment. Choose from the equipment lists at fishnick.com or call Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas®) at (562) 803-7323.

2 Maintain equipment. Daily and weekly cleaning and maintenance is the only way to assure equipment is operating efficiently and saving the most money.

3 Keep an eye on the air. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning make up a large portion of a restaurant’s energy bill. Energy-efficient air conditioning and vent hoods along with programmable thermostats are a couple of the ways to cut back on the heating/cooling bill.

4 Switch to energy-efficient lighting. When old light bulbs burn out, replacing them with energy-efficient CFLs, T8 fluorescents or LEDs can save a lot of money on energy expenses.

5 Establish a start-up/shut-down schedule. Implementing a start-up/shut-down schedule is perhaps one of the simplest ways to reduce energy usage in the kitchen.
6 Conserve hot water. Reducing hot water usage will lower two utility bills at once. Checking for leaks, using cold water whenever possible and insulating hot water pipes are a few easy ways to conserve both water and energy.

7 Retrofit old equipment. Sometimes, buying new energy-efficient equipment is not feasible, especially if current equipment still functions perfectly. For example, adding strip curtains on walk-in coolers, replacing worn door gaskets and making sure automatic door closers are functioning can improve energy efficiency.

8 Rearrange the kitchen. Keeping refrigeration and cooking equipment separate in the kitchen is crucial to reducing strain on both that equipment and the electricity bill. Also, you want to place the heaviest duty cooking appliances under the center of the vent hood, which will also improve the vent hood’s efficiency.

9 Train employees to conserve. Training employees to properly use equipment and be mindful of their habits and the effects they can have on energy consumption is crucial to reducing the energy bill. You can also encourage employees to use timers and computer controls on appliances instead of just using the manual settings.

10 Get an energy assessment. Ask your utility company if they offer a no-cost energy assessment. This can help monitor your energy efficiency and outline possible avenues to reduce usage.

Top 10 Water Conservation Tips
IGNORING A WATER LEAK IS LITERALLY FLUSHING MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN. THE FOLLOWING LIST CONTAINS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REDUCE WATER USAGE IN THE COMMERCIAL KITCHEN.

1 Buy California Energy Wise equipment. Tested and qualified equipment meets strict standards of reduced water and energy consumption.

2 Install low-flow pre-rinse spray valves. With higher pressure and a more directed spray pattern, low-flow spray valves use at most 1.6 gallons of water per minute and actually pre-clean dishes just as well as conventional models.

3 Repair all leaks immediately. A leaky faucet that drips just a tenth of a gallon a minute can waste more than 50,000 gallons of water in a year.

4 Go boilerless. Boilerless steamers and combi ovens don’t have boilers that continuously make steam and send it down the drain whether the appliance is cooking or not. Boilerless options save water and energy.

5 Only wash fully loaded dish racks. A dishwasher will use the same amount of water every time it is run, no matter how many dishes are inside. To gain the most efficiency, wash only full loads and make sure those loads are arranged so the water stream will hit all parts of the dishes.
6. Do not thaw foods under running water. Rather than waste several gallons of water to thaw food, place it in the refrigerator overnight. This will allow the food to thaw evenly while still keeping it within a safe temperature range.

7. Reuse water for other needs. Water from steam table pans or ice discarded from the salad bar can be used to water plants.

8. Turn it off. Equipment that uses water, like steamers, is left on when not being used. Turning it off or setting it to standby mode can save significant amounts of water and energy.

9. Install pedal-operated foot controllers for faucets. Foot pedals are a great way to assure that all hand and dish station sinks are shut off when the user walks away.

10. Serve water upon request only. Serving water only when requested can save a significant amount of money in water bills and reduce the strain put on natural resources.

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Top 10 Waste Reduction Tips

Starting a recycling program is just one way to reduce the amount of waste produced by food service establishments. The following list illustrates the top 10 ways to divert waste from the nation’s rapidly filling landfills.

1. Conduct a waste assessment. Whether it involves glancing at the trash or taking time to sort garbage into different categories, a waste assessment will give an accurate account of the waste being produced and help outline where alterations can be made.

2. Implement a recycling program. A successful recycling program will greatly reduce a restaurant’s garbage bill and help curb the environmental damage caused by landfills.

3. Keep an eye on food waste. If too much food is coming back uneaten, adjusting portion sizes can reduce food waste.

4. Purchase recycled content products. Products containing some percentage of post-consumer recycled content helps close the recycling loop by reusing products that were once considered garbage. Purchasing 100 percent recycled material is ideal.

5. Send food packaging back. Pallets, food crates, bulk egg cartons or any other form of reusable packaging can be sent back to the food distributor for reuse.
6 Compost organic waste. The majority of a commercial kitchen’s waste is composed of organic material. Rather than sending it to the landfill, contract with a local grower or commercial compost facility to transform organic waste into a nutrient rich soil additive that stimulates plant growth and soil health.

7 Collect used oil and grease. Used fryer oil and restaurant grease are becoming hot commodities as an alternative fuel source. Biodiesel firms are paying for these products.

8 Reclaim water. Leftover water from steam table pans and boilers can be used for some watering practices as opposed to being dumped down the drain.

9 Try reusable napkins and cleaning cloths. Since most single-use paper towels and napkins end up in a landfill, it makes economic and environmental sense to purchase products that can be cleaned and reused a number of times.

10 Replace styrofoam and plastic disposables. All single-use plastic takeout containers and utensils have biodegradable counterparts.

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Top 10 Green Cleaning Tips

GREEN CLEANING GOES BEYOND PURCHASING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY CLEANING SUPPLIES. THE FOLLOWING LIST HIGHLIGHTS THE MOST IMPORTANT WAY TO GREEN UP CURRENT CLEANING METHODS.

1 Purchase eco-friendly cleaning agents. Vinegar-based glass cleaners, citrus-based degreasers and baking soda deodorizers are just a few examples of cleaning agents that do the same job as conventional cleaners but do not have the harmful side-effects.

2 Avoid hazardous chemicals. Petroleum-based chemicals and chlorine bleach effectively kill most bacteria and germs. Unfortunately they also pose health risks to both humans and the environment. When possible, use eco-friendly chemicals or hot water to clean and sanitize.

3 Clean with recycled or reusable cloths. Cloth cleaning towels made from recycled fiber or microfiber are easily laundered for reuse. If disposable paper towels or tissues must be used, purchase those made from 100 percent recycled paper.

4 Implement a green cleaning program. An effective green cleaning program looks at more than cleaning supplies. Assuring that employees adopt more eco-minded behaviors is just as important as using green supplies.
Conserve chemicals. Whether using hazardous chemicals or green cleaners, never mix more solution than is needed.

Clean grease traps and vents. If grease traps, air vents and vent hood filters are not cleaned regularly, they can release hazardous particles into the air, which can cause health and environmental hazards.

Use dry cleanup methods for spills. To prevent oil from going down the drain, use paper or coffee grounds to clean up grease spills. To save water, always clean up other spills with dry methods before scrubbing with water.

Try eco-friendly pest control methods. There are many environmentally friendly exterminators and green pest control products that can help repel or kill ants, cockroaches, mice and fruit flies.

Keep it clean outside. Pick up any trash or spills and trim vegetation around the establishment’s perimeter. This will maintain curb appeal, clean up litter and reduce the likelihood of pest invasions.

Take your time. Though most eco-friendly cleaners work just as well as their toxic counterparts, sometimes a little more scrubbing is required. Remember that toxic cleaners are more hazardous than a little bit of hard work.

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Top 10 Educational Tips

EDUCATION IS THE KEY INGREDIENT TO GOING GREEN. PROPERLY TRAINING EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS IS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE A LASTING, GREEN IMPRESSION.

1. **Stay informed.** New research and technology is coming out on a daily basis that can affect both health codes and eco-friendly practices. Staying in the loop will assure the most up-to-date procedures are being used to save the most money and resources. No-cost educational seminars are available at SoCalGas on an ongoing basis. Call 562-803-7323 or visit socalgas.com (search “SEMINARS”).

2. **Define goals.** When implementing new policies and procedures, have a clear goal in mind, such as a 30 percent waste reduction. This will help gauge a program’s effectiveness.

3. **Train staff thoroughly.** Changing from an establishment that uses conventional, “eco-unconscious” procedures and equipment to one that practices environmental stewardship often requires changing staff behaviors. This involves thorough training that both highlights the importance of new practices and give specifics as to how new procedures will be executed.

4. **Allow time for transition.** When changing staff behavior and practices, it is important to allow time for new procedures to take hold. Repetition is the best learning method, but it takes time.
Set an example. Changing behavior is a top down process. It is important that owners and managers adopt the green practices to show that the restaurant is serious about reducing its environmental impact.

Use proper signage. Placing informative and easy-to-read signs in the kitchen area and throughout the restaurant will remind employees of the importance of green initiatives.

Reward innovation. Setting up an incentive program for employees that come up with a new eco-friendly practice will encourage employee involvement and can help tailor generalized green practices to a particular establishment.

Continually assess. Regular energy, water and waste assessments will monitor a program’s success and can highlight the next avenue to cost and environmental savings.

Every day is a green day. Though Earth Day comes only once a year, environmental problems do not go away when the day ends. Reducing utility costs and environmental impact is something that requires a year-round effort.

Educate customers. Whether through posted signs, table tents or menu inserts, informing customers about an establishment’s environmental practices can increase customer loyalty and traffic as well as encouraging at-home, eco-friendly changes.

EQUIPMENT REBATES

Rebates are a great way to offset the initial cost of energy-efficient equipment and save you money. Rebates are currently available on a variety of high-efficiency equipment including:

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<tr>
<th>EQUIPMENT TYPE</th>
<th>REBATE/UNIT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Double Rack Ovens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial Combination Ovens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial Pressureless Steamers</td>
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<td>Commercial Convection Ovens</td>
<td>$500</td>
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<td>Commercial High-Efficiency Fryers</td>
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<td>Large-Vat Fryers</td>
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<td>Commercial Griddles</td>
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For a full list of energy-efficient equipment visit socalgas.com (search “COOKING EQUIPMENT”).

Buy any new equipment this year? If so, it could qualify for a rebate. If you think you bought energy-efficient cooking equipment, call 1-800-GAS-2000 to find out if you qualify for a rebate!
NO-COST ENERGY ASSESSMENT

Take SoCalGas’ no-cost online Energy Challenger Survey to learn how you can improve the energy efficiency of your business. The survey can approximate the total energy usage for your facility and identify specific areas of improvement for your business.

For more information, visit socalgas.com (search "ENERGY CHALLENGER").
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