

V.I. Energy Office Provides Best Practices on Saving Energy During Coronavirus Pandemic; 40 Percent Rebate on 'ENERGY STAR' Products Available

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The Virgin Islands Energy Office on Thursday provided some best practices on how residents could reduce their energy bill. The tips are provided as Virgin Islanders — under a stay-at-home order from the government — are consuming more energy while at home, as they seek entertainment options to pass time and, with the weather being hot, use coolers such as fans and AC units for comfort. These items, however, cause energy consumption to surge.

To avoid excessive increases in utility bills during these economically challenging times, the VI Energy Office suggests that residents implement the following best practices into their daily

routine:

Cooking:

- Prepare multiple meals for the week at once to avoid reoccurring and extended cooking times.
- Grill outdoors whenever possible to reduce energy usage as well as reduce temperatures within the kitchen or home.
- Use the correct sized pots and pans and keep a lid on when possible to prevent heat loss and speed up cooking time.
- Do not cover your oven racks with aluminum foil. It restricts proper air flow and increases cooking time.

Natural Cooling:

- Use ceiling fans to help circulate the air and turn them off when no one is in the room. • Open windows when possible to circulate fresh air.

Air Conditioning:

- Properly size your AC unit and make sure all windows and doors are closed and sealed sufficiently. • Change air filters in AC units. Clogged filters use more energy to cool rooms.
- Set the AC thermostat between 75°- 78° F.
- Use a dehumidifier to reduce humidity levels and minimize the growth of mold and mildew.
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Water Usage:

- Fix all leaks and drips.
- Use water-saving shower heads, faucet aerators, and toilets.
- Try to avoid taking long showers! Use a timer to determine if you need to shorten your bathing time. • Wash full loads using cold water & air-dry clothes when possible. If unable to air dry, then be sure to use an ENERGY STAR® electric or gas dryer.

Water Heating 101:

- Install a timer on your water heater to schedule when to turn the hot water on or off automatically. • Install a manual switch to control when to heat your water.
- If possible, invest in a solar water heater, heat pump water heater, or gas tankless water heater.
- Always clean and maintain your appliances. Make sure to unplug them first, depending on the type of maintenance to be done.
- Do NOT overload your power strip! This can result in a tripped breaker or electrical fire due to overheating.

To further assist USVI residents and businesses with saving energy, the VIEO said it continues to provide financial incentives to replace inefficient or broken appliances by offering a 40% rebate on select ENERGY STAR® certified products.

As a bonus, beginning today, persons who submit rebate applications are eligible to receive a “Kill A Watt” Energy Meter, which is a device that measures the amount of energy an appliance uses. This tool provides real data that can help you determine if you should replace an existing appliance with a more energy-efficient model, or if you need to change your usage, said the Energy Office. There is a limit of one device per household due to the limited supplies available.

To request a rebate application by email, send your request, and completed rebate forms to:

- St. Croix: Melissa Carter, Acting Grants Program Coordinator, melissa.carter@eo.vi.gov
- St. Thomas: Molissa Brin, Administrative Aide, molissa.brin@eo.vi.gov Applications can be mailed or faxed to:
- 4101 Mars Hill, Frederiksted, VI 00840-3793 Fax: (340) 772-0063
- 4605 Tutu Park Mall, Suite 231, St. Thomas, VI 00802-1736 Fax: (340) 776-1914

This program targets homeowners, renters, and small businesses by assisting them to reduce their energy consumption and carbon footprint by providing a financial incentive for the purchase of select energy-efficient appliances, building materials, and products, Solar Rating & Certification Corporation (ICC-SRCCTM) solar water heater systems, and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) approved or listed portable power stations with solar panels. ENERGY STAR® is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency voluntary program that promotes the development and sale of high-quality energy-efficient products that exceed the federal specification for energy use. Visit www.energystar.gov to access their database of certified products.

For more information, call the VIEO St. Croix office at (340) 713-8436 or St. Thomas office at (340) 714-8436, or visit us at www.facebook.com/VirginIslandsEnergyOffice.