

VIRGIN ISLANDS ENERGY OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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V.I. ENERGY OFFICE OFFER WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ST. CROIX, USVI – The Virgin Islands Energy Office (VIEO) encourages all U.S. Virgin Islands residents to continue to adhere to the recommendations of the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Health by preventing the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), by practicing social distancing and staying at home.

Stay at Home orders in affect within the Virgin Islands present a wide range of social impacts on our community. Extended time at home, especially during the hottest times of day, will result in increased energy usage and cost for many residential utility customers. To avoid excessive increases in utility bills during these economically challenging times the VIEO suggests that the VI community become Energy Vigilant while Staying at Home. To this end, the VIEO recommends the following "Best Energy Practices" for your daily routines to help reduce your energy bill:

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.

Water Usage:

- Fix all leaks and drips.
- Use water-saving showerheads, 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.

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REMEMBER...SAFETY FIRST!

- 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 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 Thursday, April 23, 2020, 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. 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-SRCC™) 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.

For up to date information on the Coronavirus, visit the Virgin Islands Department of Health’s website at: www.doh.vi.gov/coronavirus or text COVID19USVI to 88877.

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