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# The Virgin Island Energy Office

Telephone 773.1082 [www.vienergy.org](http://www.vienergy.org)

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## Air Conditioners

It might surprise you to know that buying a bigger room air-conditioning unit won't necessarily make you feel more comfortable during the hot summer months. In fact, a room air conditioner that's too big for the area it is supposed to cool will perform less efficiently and less effectively than a smaller, properly sized unit.

This is because room units work better if they run for relatively long periods of time than if they are continually switching off and on. Longer run times allow air conditioners to maintain a more constant room temperature and remove excess humidity.

- Sizing is equally important for central air-conditioning systems, which need to be sized by professionals. If you have a central air system in your home, set the fan to shut off at the same time as the cooling unit (compressor). In other words, don't use the system's central fan to provide circulation, but instead use circulating fans in individual rooms.

### Cooling Tips

- Whole-house fans help cool your home by pulling cool air through the house and exhausting warm air through the attic. They are effective when operated at night and when the outside air is cooler than the inside.
- Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible in the summer. The less difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.
- Don't set your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and, therefore, unnecessary expense.
- Consider using an interior fan in conjunction with your window air conditioner to spread the cooled air more effectively through your home without greatly increasing your power use.
- Don't place lamps or TV sets near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.
- Plant trees or shrubs to shade air conditioning units but not to block the airflow. Place your room air conditioner on the north side of the house. A unit operating in the shade uses as much as 10% less electricity than the same one operating in the sun.
- Keep in mind that insulation and sealing air leaks will help your energy performance in the summertime by keeping the cool air inside.
- \$ Long-Term Savings Tip: If your air conditioner is old, consider purchasing a new, energy-efficient model. You could save up to 50% on your utility bill for cooling. Look for the ENERGY STAR® and EnergyGuide labels. The shopping guide in the back of this booklet will help you find the right size unit for your needs.