

**YOU and YOUR HVAC UNIT
MAINTAINING A HEALTHY and HAPPY RELATIONSHIP**



Over the years HVAC units have become more efficient in not only cooling and heating your UVa home, but filtration devices have been developed to improve air quality and to extend the life of your unit. It is very important that you follow these simple rules to maintain a healthy and happy relationship with your cooling and heating unit.

Rule #1: Maintain clearance – avoid blocking the unit with furniture (bed, shelves, etc.), clothing (clean, dirty, or wet), trash cans, books, etc. You may ask, “*Why can’t I put these things on top, in front, or on the side of my unit?*” The answer is... your unit needs to breathe just like you. That’s why it’s never a good idea to lay damp towels or clothes on your unit to dry. Not only does this block the air flow the dampness circulates in the air.

Rule #2: Maintain cleanliness – avoid clutter especially from trash, clothes, etc. Good housekeeping will allow your unit to work better and healthier for you. Think about the germs in a trash can from dirty tissues, rotting food, or like items. If your trash can is placed close to your unit it can circulate particles and bacteria that become airborne. These particles and bacteria are pulled into the unit and blown out and then you end up breathing them. Remember to empty your trash frequently (*before it over flows onto your floor*). It’s always recommended to use a dryer in the laundry room instead of hanging your damp clothes around your room. Trying to dry clothes like this is known to cause mold and mildew on your clothes and furniture in your room.

Rule #3: Maintain proper setting – it’s a myth that frequently adjusting the thermostat control up and down will keep your living space cool and comfortable. Doing this creates condensation on the unit, walls, furniture, and other items. Condensation is a good breeding ground for mold and mildew. Also, setting the cooling temperature to a too cold of a setting can create a “basement like” atmosphere... cold and damp.

Rule #4: Maintain for health – avoid creating allergens. If you start feeling bad with a headache, runny nose, watery eyes, dry cough and such and you normally do not have allergies, it could be because your unit is blocked or the thermostat is not properly set. Maintaining your living area can eliminate these symptoms. However, if you know that you have followed these rules and you are experiencing these symptoms contact your doctor or Student Health as soon as possible to have it checked out.

Elson Student Health Center at the University of Virginia
Main telephone number (434) 924-5362

Rule #5: Help care for your unit – call for repairs. If your unit is not working properly contact the Housing Facilities Office at 243-3633 or submit a Housing Work Order as soon as possible. For example, if you notice any water pooling or leaking around your unit, don’t ignore it! Turn your unit ‘OFF’ and submit a Work Order. Please do not continue operating the unit if it is not working properly. This causes an uncomfortable living environment for you and could damage the unit.