

Tips to Cool Your Home

A resource for building operators

Housing and service providers should prepare early in the year to prevent and reduce impacts of extreme heat on tenants, clients, and staff. Below is a list of tips to share with tenants:

- ✓ **Host Info Session & Provide Info:** Ensure tenants are aware of these best practices for extreme heat. For those who can't attend, ensure they get the information, which should include:
 - **Windows:** Invite tenants to open windows when air is cooler outside (at night) and close them when the air is hotter outside (during the day). Create cross-breeze if possible, using fans to bring in cooler air.
 - **Shading:** Invite tenants to tilt blinds to deflect direct sun; it can be possible to do this while retaining some view of the outside which can provide significant mental health benefits, & /or close window coverings during the day to avoid direct sun.
 - **Turn it Off / Avoid Heat:** Raise awareness with tenants of the benefits of reducing or eliminating the use of heat generating appliances like stoves, ovens & dishwashers during periods of extreme heat to reduce heat emitted.
 - **Beat the Heat:** Make sure that all tenants have a list of places to go in the building or community that are cooling room or shelters. Some tenants may need assistance to get to this space for mobility or other reasons.
- ✓ **Share Latest Research & Info:** Ensure that all tenants receive this information. This may include communication sheets about extreme heat:
 - **Print & Post:** [Health Canada sheet](#) &/or BC Housing's [Tips to Beat the Heat](#) (poster available in [10 languages](#)) in common areas,
 - **Talk to Tenants:** Make sure that all tenants, regardless of languages spoken or mobility, or other factors, receive this information as heat can be deadly,
 - **Pre-Identified Tenants:** If you have pre-identified tenants that are isolated or with specific health, mobility or social vulnerabilities, please check on them, ensure they are safe and prepared for heat. This should be done well in advance of a potential extreme heat event, and ideally in the spring.
 - Assign lead(s) to monitor for [hot weather warnings](#), [poor air quality reports](#) and [current wildfire activity](#).
 - **Please Note: Above 31° the use of fans can cause harm, as it does not lower room or body temperature.** *Evidence shows that using fans for personal cooling is not very effective. For people who are older or experiencing chronic health issues, fans may make heat illness worse. Health officials recommend monitoring temperature in the home and leaving if it gets above 31 degrees for a long period of time.*

For more information about how to prepare your building(s) for extreme heat, see the Extreme Heat Checklist Resource for building operators.

Tips to Beat The Heat

Cool Your Body



- Wet clothing to help bring down body temperature
- Use water-soaked cloths or cooling packs on neck/wrists
- Sit in or put legs in cool (not cold) bath

Hydrate



- Drink water/cool liquids
- Eat fresh fruit & salads
- Drink before you feel thirsty. Thirst is not the only indicator of dehydration

Reduce Indoor Heat



- Daytime: cool living and working areas by closing windows, and use window coverings, air conditioners and misters
- Nighttime: keep windows open, with a fan near window to bring in cool air

Protect Your Pets



- Provide shade & cool drinking water & baths
- Never leave pets unattended in cars or direct sunlight
- Plan outdoor activities during cooler parts of day. Asphalt might be too hot for bare paws

Avoid Sun Exposure



- Wear wide-brimmed, breathable hat or use umbrella
- Avoid / limit strenuous activities during hottest part of the day
- Find shade if you need to be outside
- Use sunscreen

Ask Your Doctor



- If taking medications, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you need to be extra careful
- Some medical conditions may increase vulnerability during hot weather

Check on Others



- Visit or call family & neighbours when you can

Avoid/Limit Alcohol & Caffeine



- These can lead to dehydration

Extreme heat can be dangerous.

www.healthlinkbc.ca/more/health-features/beat-heat

www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat