Space Cooling Strategies
Strategies to cool individual suites, common areas & entire buildings

Risk of heat-related illness starts to increase at indoor temperatures over 26°C for susceptible people, and it increases significantly for everyone at sustained indoor temperatures of 31°C or above. If a residence gets that hot, it is advisable to move to a cooler space.1

No- or Low-Cost Cooling Strategies
Keeping buildings cool can be challenging, especially in older buildings. No- or low-cost ways to provide cooling include:

- **Minimize Heat:** Tilt or close blinds & drapes against the sun
- **Open & Close Windows:** Open windows when outside air is cooler; Close windows when it’s cooler inside than out
- **Airflow:** Open windows across room/s or use fans to bring cooler air in ONLY if outside air is cooler than inside air
- **Fans:** Bring cooler air in; Bathroom & stove fans can remove heat & humidity if air outside is cooler
- **Turn It Off:** Limit or eliminate heat from stoves, ovens, dryers & dishwashers by reducing use
- **Building Upgrade:** Where & when appropriate, add external shading, window film

Mechanical Cooling Strategies
Mechanical cooling may be needed to ensure tenants’ thermal safety in a heat wave, and can be used in suites, or refuge areas/designated cooling spaces.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lower cost, easy installation, less efficient</th>
<th>Higher cost, more involved installation, more efficient</th>
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| **Portable Air Conditioners**  
✓ Portable  
✓ Installation is easy & inexpensive  
• Electric costs = 5 times that of a fan  
• Only works for smaller sized spaces  
× Less efficient – operation discharges heat  
× Noisy operation  
× Has placement restrictions  
× Could go missing  
× Water drainage/management issues  
× Requires frequent filter maintenance  
△ 2 hose models are more efficient than single hose models  | **Central Air Conditioning Including Heat Pumps (HP)**  
✓ Quiet operation  
✓ Cools entire suite/common areas  
✓ May be used for multiple rooms  
✓ HP: Very efficient  
✓ HP: Low running costs  
✓ HP: Incentives may be available  
× Expensive to purchase and install  
△ May not be possible in some existing buildings |
| **Personal Fans – Pedestal/Tower**  
✓ Inexpensive to purchase  
✓ Low running costs & energy usage  
✓ Best used to bring cool air into room  
✓ Portable, adjustable airflow direction  
✓ Temporary relief if aimed at skin  
• Single room use only  
△ Above 31° can cause harm: does not lower room or body temperature.  
! **Health Note:** Evidence shows using fans for personal cooling is not very effective. Above certain temperatures fans may make heat illness worse.  | **Mini Split Heat Pumps – Ductless**  
✓ Cost savings: both heating & cooling  
✓ Very efficient & quiet operation  
✓ Low running costs  
✓ Requires only a small hole in wall  
• May be used for multiple rooms  
× Expensive to purchase and install  |
| **Ducted Terminal Heat Pumps (PTHP)**  
✓ Cost savings: both heating & cooling  
✓ Very efficient & quiet operation  
✓ Low running costs  
× Requires two 6”-8” small holes in wall  |  |

Note: BC Housing Design Standards do not permit the use of Window Mounted Air Conditioners, nor do we recommend the use of Packaged Terminal Air Conditioners (PTACs).