

# **Heat Relief Communications**

## **2019 Shoulder Season Activities Overview**

**Board of Health**  
**April 8, 2019**

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**Toronto Public Health**

1. Background
2. Communications objective
3. Communications strategy
4. Key messages
5. Response
6. Next steps
7. Broader heat relief response

- Under the Toronto Municipal Code Property Standards bylaw, all landlords are responsible for providing heat to a minimum air temperature of 21°C from September 15 to June 1.
- Some landlords interpret the bylaw as requiring heat remain on until June 1, which can make apartments uncomfortably hot during warm ‘shoulder season’ days (May & September).
- In March, City Council requested Municipal Licensing & Standards, the Medical Officer of Health and Strategic Communications to develop a strategy to continue to increase communication to landlords and the public about shoulder season heating in residential apartment buildings<sub>3</sub>

## **Drive building owner and landlord action**

- Reinforce the intent of the bylaw
- Ensure landlords understand their obligations to residents
- Encourage landlords to use their judgement and be reasonable

## **Build tenant awareness**

- Educate residents about shoulder season cooling challenges
- Educate residents about actions they can take to address building heating with their landlord
- Promote cooling strategies and online Heat Relief Network map

- Shoulder-season communications are part of the City's wider heat relief communication efforts.
- Led by Municipal Licensing & Standards, general shoulder-season communications will begin in May.
- Building on 2018 activities, enhanced communication will target apartment landlords and tenants.
- Communications will launch with a letter and "Heat 101" package to landlords, partners and social media posts.
- As temperatures increase, additional communications will be triggered.

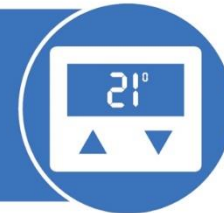
- “Heat 101” package to primary building contact (building owner, property manager, superintendent, etc.)
  - Letter
  - Graphic (new 2019)
  - Heat Safety Notice for tenant information boards
  - Information on nearby cool spaces
- Webpage, [toronto.ca/heatbylaw](http://toronto.ca/heatbylaw)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram): 363,000 followers
- New for 2019: Trade publication advertising
- Strengthened for 2019: Information sharing with key partners
  - Councillors
  - Landlord Tenant Board
  - Tower Renewal
  - [TorontoLandlords.ca](http://TorontoLandlords.ca)
  - Greater Toronto Apartment Association
  - Federation of Rental-Housing Providers of Ontario
  - Building Owners and Managers Association

## IT'S HOT!

**Landlords can turn off residential apartment building heat on warm spring and fall days.**

### MINIMUM INDOOR TEMPERATURE

Under City of Toronto bylaws, landlords are responsible for maintaining a minimum air temperature of 21°C from September 15 to June 1.



### WARM SPRING & FALL DAYS

Sometimes warm spring or fall weather can maintain an indoor temperature of 21°C or higher without heating. On these days, apartments can get too hot if the heat is on.



### USE YOUR JUDGEMENT

On warm spring and fall days, landlords can turn heat down or off to keep indoor temperatures comfortably around 21°C.



# Landlord Communication



## USE YOUR JUDGEMENT

If the outdoor weather means that the building temperature would be above 21°C without the heat on, you can turn the heat down or off.





# Tenant Communication

- Brochures for tenants, distributed:
  - during building audits
  - tenant outreach events, i.e. Open Street TO
  - Toronto Fire Services “Alarmed for Life” program
- Webpage, [toronto.ca/heatbylaw](https://toronto.ca/heatbylaw)
- Social media posts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram): 363,000 followers
- Posters with multilingual 311 contact information for building common areas and community partners
- New for 2019: Posters and messaging sharing with tenant advocacy groups
  - Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO)
  - Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations (FMTA)
  - ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now)
  - Shelter, Support & Housing Administration partners



# Hot Weather-Driven Response



**New:** During shoulder season when hot days are forecast, the following responses will be triggered:

- Social media posts
- Messaging reminder to 311
- City spokesperson and messaging

1. Send out “Heat 101” packages to building owners/delegates
2. Provide Councillors with information on heat relief (e.g. sample newsletter article, social media content)
3. Provide materials to community partners
4. Begin social media posts
5. Monitor weather for triggering of heat-driven response

1. Expand Heat Relief Network
2. Searchable website for cool space
3. Neighbour checking
4. Resources to landlords, staff training
5. Shade structures
6. Bylaw updates to consider requirements for shade structure/cool room, tenant's list, windows, redevelopment and incentives
7. Distribute educational resources – e.g. 3500 through the Home Library Service to individuals who are homebound