



FEDERATION OF
METRO TENANTS'
ASSOCIATIONS

RE: EX28.3 - Towards Implementing a Maximum Indoor Temperature Requirement for Rental Units and Cooling Rooms

The Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations (FMTA) strongly supports the establishment of a Maximum Indoor Temperature By-Law in the coming year. This measure is essential to protect tenant health and safety, particularly as the climate crisis poses increasing risks to tenants, as some of the City's most vulnerable residents.

The FMTA is recommending the following measures be implemented in the development of the Maximum Indoor Temperature By-Law:

- A maximum indoor temperature standard of 26°C for leased residential premises, year-round.
- Expand the City of Toronto's air conditioner assistance program aimed at providing access to air conditioning for low-income and vulnerable households to include all Multi-Unit Residential Buildings (MURBS) Multi-Tenant Housing (MTH) tenants.
- Expand City retrofit programs to enable all Multi-Unit Residential Buildings (MURBS) and Multi-Tenant Housing (MTH) to meet health and safety standards, preventing costs from being passed to tenants.
- Increased pressure from Toronto officials to urge the Province of Ontario to reform the Residential Tenancies Act and recognize cooling as a vital service, establishing a universal maximum indoor temperature standard for all tenants.

Background

Extreme heat is a growing threat to our communities. Weather events have become increasingly unpredictable and with on-average temperatures expected to [rise 6 degrees for Toronto alone](#) by 2050, the City must be prepared to deal with its dangerous health effects, particularly for our most vulnerable residents.

We see this impact on tenants—especially those experiencing housing precarity in the summer months as extended heat warnings become the norm, rather than the exception. For tenants—particularly those in older multi-unit buildings without adequate ventilation or cooling—prolonged indoor heat is not merely an inconvenience; it is a severe threat to health, safety, and equity. Many Toronto tenants face harsh reprisals from landlords who refuse to let air conditioning be installed in residential units to deal with the extreme heat—a dangerous gambit that could result in tragedy.

According to the [World Health Organization](#), heat-related mortality for people over 65 years of age increased by approximately 85% between 2000–2004 and 2017–2021. While we are very happy to see the City of Toronto taking action to address the health impacts of heat on tenants, particularly in the senior air conditioner pilot program launched earlier this year, much more needs to be done.

The FMTA would like to see the expansion of the air conditioner pilot program to include all Multi-Unit Residential Buildings (MURBS) Multi-Tenant Housing (MTH) tenants. In the case of MTH tenants specifically, the expansion of this pilot would serve to protect vulnerable communities who are most impacted by the climate and housing crisis. This includes seniors, newcomers, migrant workers, people with disabilities, and those facing addiction or mental health barriers.

Additionally, the City must significantly enhance its funding and incentives for energy retrofits targeting Multi-Unit Residential Buildings (MURBs) and MTH housing. This would improve passive cooling, ventilation, and insulation crucial to face rising temperatures. Crucially, program agreements must include strong tenant protection clauses to legally prevent landlords from passing the cost of these necessary upgrades onto tenants through above-guideline rent increases.¹

Finally, municipal action, while vital, cannot replace the need for provincial law. The current RTA fails to address 21st-century climate realities. We strongly recommend that the City Council, through the Mayor's Office and

¹ For more information on FMTA's position on retrofits, please see our statement presented at the Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting on December 3rd: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2025/ie/comm/communicationfile-199555.pdf>

intergovernmental affairs channels, publicly and persistently pressure the Province of Ontario to amend the RTA to:

- formally recognize “cooling” as a vital service, equivalent to heating, and;
- Establish a universal, province-wide maximum indoor temperature standard, thereby creating a consistent and enforceable right for all Ontario tenants.

Conclusion

For the well-being of Toronto’s tenants, the time for action is now. The climate crisis is already reshaping our summers into seasons of risk, and the most vulnerable among us—seniors, newcomers, people with disabilities, and those living in under-resourced housing—should not have to endure risk and harm that is entirely preventable. The proposed Maximum Indoor Temperature By-Law—supported by expanded cooling assistance, funded retrofits with tenant protections, and sustained advocacy for provincial reform—is both urgent and necessary.

We urge the City to move forward with adopting these measures that ensure Toronto is a safe and livable City that is not just afforded to the few, but all residents. We hope to support the implementation of these critical protections and look forward to working with the City to build a healthier, fairer, and more resilient Toronto for everyone.

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