

Keeping Homes Cool

Thermal safety and retrofit options for residential property owners and managers

Extreme heat is a serious health and life-safety risk. This guide helps owners and managers of residential properties understand the building's cooling needs, identify suitable cooling options, and take action. Property owners and managers should consult the City webpage on [Indoor Temperatures in Apartment Units](#) or reach out to City staff at MLSc consultations@toronto.ca for information on current indoor temperature bylaw requirements.

WHY ADD COOLING?



Protect residents

Reduce exposure to unsafe indoor heat and support resident health and safety.



Strengthen your residential property

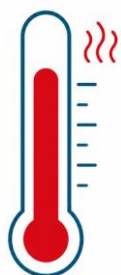
Improve comfort, attract residents, and add long-term value.



Make the most of planned upgrades

Integrate cooling with planned building renewals and equipment upgrades.

THE 26°C BENCHMARK



26°C

Keeping indoor temperatures below 26°C helps reduce heat-related illness, especially for older adults, young children, pregnant people, and those with chronic health conditions.

SUPPORT RESIDENTS DURING EXTREME HEAT

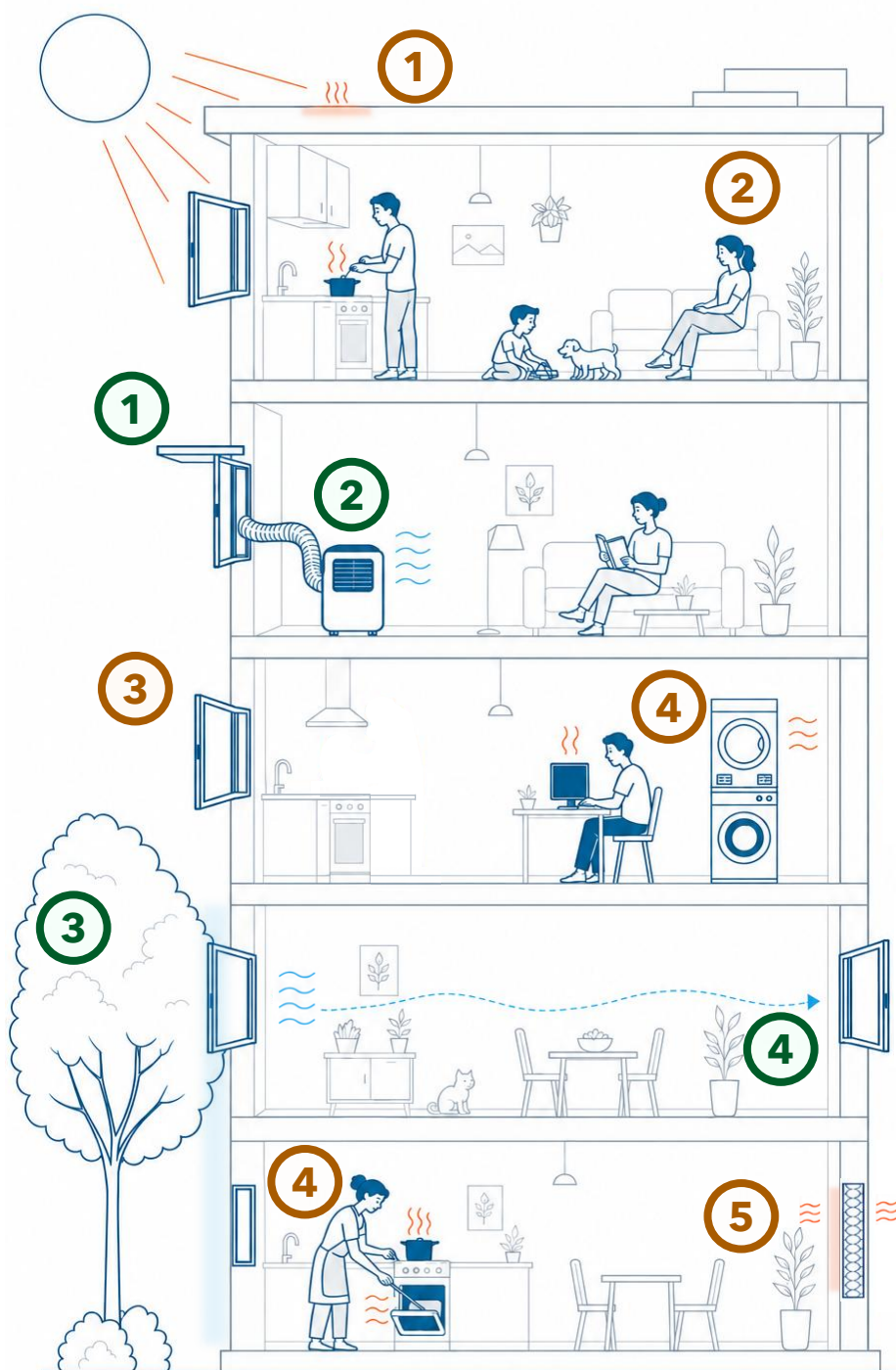
Even with cooling, extreme heat can still pose risks. Share these City of Toronto resources:

- › [Toronto Public Health – Keep Cool](#)
- › [Toronto Heat Relief Network – Cool Spaces](#)
- › [City of Toronto – Heat Warnings & Alerts](#)
- › [311 Toronto – City Services](#)



WHAT AFFECTS OVERHEATING RISK?

A building's design, condition, and exposure can significantly affect indoor heat. Overheating risk can also vary within a building based on floor level, orientation, window size, shading, ventilation, cooling, appliance use, and occupants.



Factors that **increase** overheating risk

- 1 Roof exposure
- 2 More occupants
- 3 Large and/or south/west-facing windows
- 4 Use of heat producing appliances
- 5 Exposed walls and poor envelope / insulation

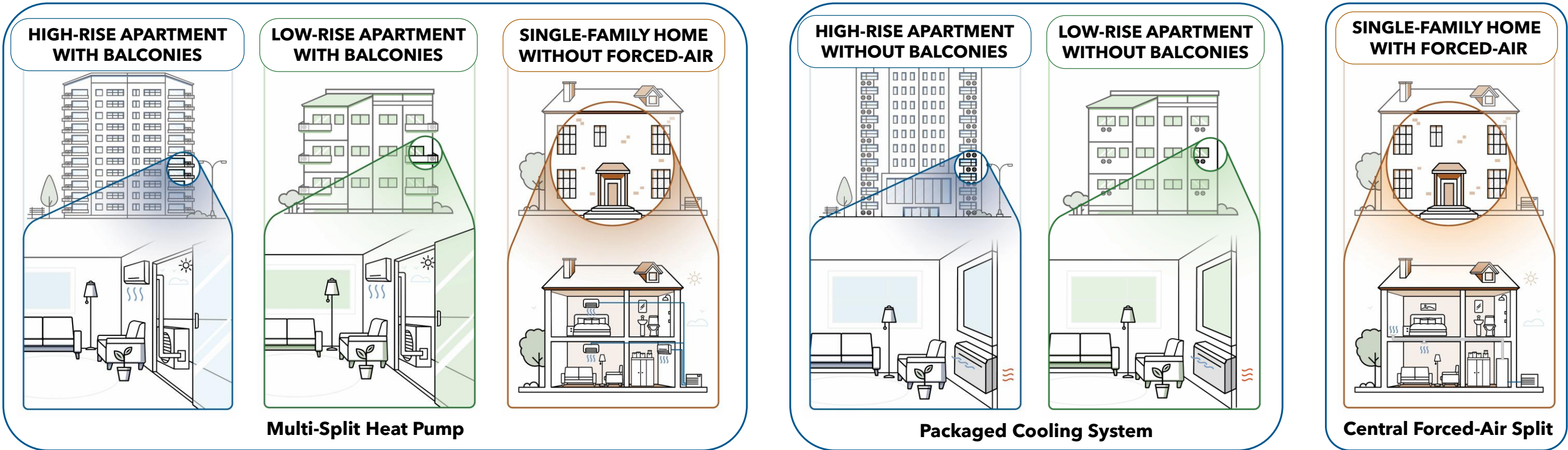
Factors that **decrease** overheating risk

- 1 Physical shading
- 2 Mechanical cooling
- 3 Shading from tree cover
- 4 Ventilation

Cooling Solutions & Planning the Work

Long-term Cooling By Building Type

Long-term cooling systems – like a heat pump – cool part or all of a home or building. Find your home or building below to see the recommended cooling option.



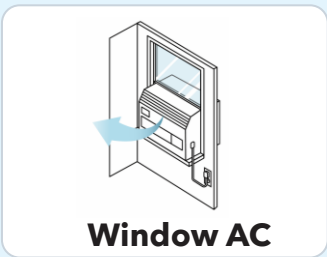
Immediate Thermal Safety

Portable & Window AC

Partial cooling for fast relief.

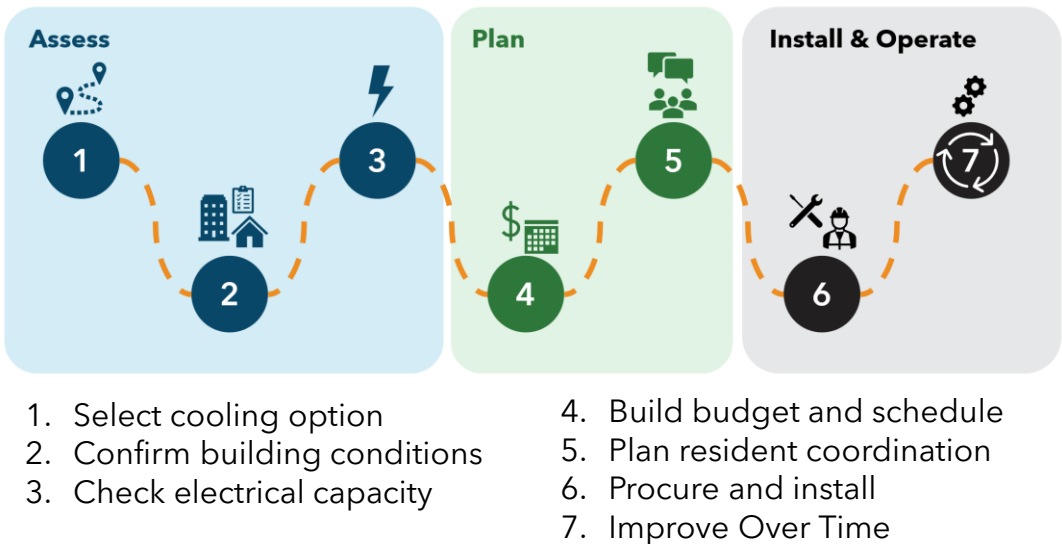
The fastest way to reduce overheating risk in existing buildings: low cost, quick install, and limited building modifications. Can be a useful interim solution while planning longer-term cooling upgrades.

Keep in mind. Cools only one room, other rooms may still overheat. Has higher noise levels and may reduce daylight or views.



Planning the Work

Seven steps from assessment to implementation.



Get the Full Guidance

This summary draws on the full **Cooling Retrofit Guidance**, which includes detailed cooling option sheets by building type, step-by-step planning, and funding & resources. Access the full guide here: [Indoor Temperatures in Apartment Units](#)

Be sure to consult an expert.

This guide provides general information only. It does not replace building-specific engineering, electrical, legal, financial, or contractor advice. Property owners are ultimately responsible for complying with all building requirements. Failure to obtain building permits can result in costly construction delays, legal action and/or the removal of work already completed. Please consult qualified professionals when evaluating cooling retrofits.