

AIR CONDITIONING (AC) Units



Residential Tenancy Branch

Landlords and tenants are encouraged to work together to ensure AC units are safely installed, operated, and do not cause damage.

Temperature Requirements

- The *Residential Tenancy Act* does not have maximum temperatures for rental units
- The *Act* does not require that landlords allow AC units in rental units
- Starting March 2024, [BC Building Code 2024](#) requires all new residential buildings to provide one living space that does not exceed 26 degrees Celsius
- This requirement does not apply to existing residential buildings

Prohibitions & Limitations on AC Units

Tenants may install and use AC units if it is not prohibited or limited by their tenancy agreement.

A ban on AC units could be considered unconscionable (which means it is unenforceable) if it grossly impacted the health and quality of life of the tenant. However, if a landlord shows there are safety or building issues around having AC units, a ban may be enforceable.

The following limitations on AC units would likely not be considered unconscionable:

- ⇒ Restricting the number of AC units that a tenant can have
- ⇒ Limiting AC units to a certain number of BTU (cooling power)
- ⇒ Prohibiting window-installed AC units in rental units above the ground level for safety reasons

See [Policy Guideline 8: Unconscionable, Unlawful, and Material Terms](#) for more information

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Installing AC Units

- Terms around the installation and use of AC units should be set out and agreed to in the tenancy agreement
- Landlords and tenants are encouraged to work together to ensure AC units are safely installed, operated, and do not cause any damage to the unit
- Recognizing the roles and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants around AC units can help support the needs of both parties

Where an AC unit is not a viable option, landlords are encouraged to find solutions that consider the needs of tenants. This includes providing access to cooling rooms and investments in electrical upgrades to accommodate the use of AC units.

Tenants are encouraged to educate themselves on heat preparedness and response.

Resources

- ◇ Find out more about [how to prepare for extreme heat and drought](#)
- ◇ [Policy Guideline 8: Unconscionable, Unlawful, and Material Terms](#)
- ◇ [BC Hydro's Free Portable Air Conditioners](#) for income qualified households and individuals referred by regional health authority programs
- ◇ Local governments can establish and enforce standards of maintenance bylaws for existing buildings. This may include provisions to ensure that rental units have adequate cooling systems in place or allow AC units