

# Giving Effect to Cooling Rights in a Climate Emergency through the Licence By-law

Development, Buildings & Licensing  
June 3, 2026



**Therefore be it resolved that** Council direct staff to report back with options and recommendations regarding a by-law that prevents landlords from prohibiting or preventing tenants from using portable cooling devices when no air conditioning is otherwise provided;

**Further that** this report back from staff should include consideration of:

- a) How to regulate strata units;
- b) Enforcement tools including municipal ticket information and by-law notices; and
- c) A possible appeal process similar to the one in section 24.1 of the Standards of Maintenance By-law.

- Hot weather, especially prolonged extreme heat events, can result in negative health outcomes
- Extreme heat events are becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change
- 98% of the 619 heat-related deaths during the 2021 BC heat dome, occurred indoors without adequate cooling systems
- Residents living in multi-unit residential buildings reported more barriers to cooling their homes
- Vancouver Building By-law updated in 2025 to include cooling requirements for all new buildings
- No equivalent requirements are in place for existing buildings in Vancouver

## **Purpose**

Explore options to prevent landlords from prohibiting or restricting tenants from using portables cooling devices when no air conditioning is otherwise provided.

## **Guiding principles**

1. Protect tenant health and safety
2. Ensure clear and balanced landlord responsibilities
3. Avoid regulatory duplication with other levels of government

Staff reviewed cooling and tenant health and safety regulations in comparable jurisdictions in Canada and the United States (US).

- 2 cities (New Westminster and Port Moody) have regulations to prohibit landlords from restricting the use of portable cooling devices.
- Several municipalities, predominantly in the US, have established regulations for landlords related to cooling.
  - Cooling required in unit with phased implementation
  - Cooled common gathering area in building
  - Maintain AC if provided
- 14 municipalities provide a maximum allowable indoor temperature.
- Among provinces and states, Ontario and Oregon have regulations that restrict landlords on disallowing portable cooling units

Staff consulted with industry stakeholders to gather feedback on potential regulations. Main themes include:

- Support for cooling regulations, many citing the importance of enabling tenants to manage cooling when there are high indoor temperatures
- Concerns raised about cost of utilities, issues with improperly installed or maintained equipment, and limitations with electrical capacity
- Amplified challenges for non-market housing and SRO buildings due to funding restraints and older building typology
- One of many approaches to reduce barriers to tenant health and safety for cooling
- Stakeholders were supportive of providing education and resources to complement proposed regulations

1. **Prohibit Landlords from disallowing AC units.** Amend the Licence By-law to prevent landlords from restricting tenants from using portable cooling devices when cooling is otherwise not provided.
  - Fine amount of \$1,000 in the Ticket Offences By-law
  - Regulatory exception for building owners and landlords when they are unable to reasonably comply
  
2. **The Mayor, on behalf of Council, send a letter to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs to:**
  - advocate for provincial regulations on prohibiting landlords and strata corporations from restricting tenants from using portable cooling devices
  - request an update on previous CoV request to enable maximum indoor temperature standards by amending Vancouver Charter

# Thank you

