

## Fact Sheet

# Preparing your home for hot weather



## How can Scorecard help you prepare for heatwaves?

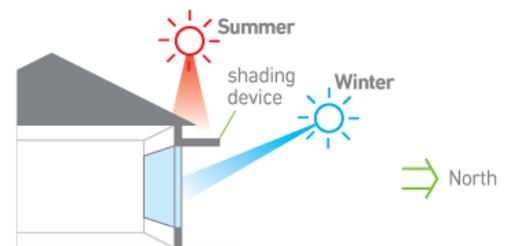
Figuring out how to keep your home cool can be complicated, and professional advice about what to do can really help. The Scorecard is the only home rating program that includes a hot weather rating on a scale of 1 to 5, developed to help Victorians manage heatwave conditions more safely. A Scorecard assessor will look at your home and provide advice tailored to your circumstances.

A home with a 5-out-of-5 hot weather rating is relatively easy to keep cool without cooling appliances. A Scorecard assessment will give you advice on how to help your home perform better in hot weather without artificial cooling. A high-rated home stays cool when the power goes out and uses less electricity when it's on, reducing energy bills and producing less strain on the energy system on hot days.

There is more about how Scorecard assessments work at the end of this fact sheet.

## What you need to know

- Stop the sunshine from hitting your house, particularly your windows: it's one of the most effective ways you can keep your house cool. Heat travels through walls and through windows, even when they're closed.
- Keeping your home cool will most likely take a combination of smart behaviour, simple changes and bigger home upgrades.



### SHADE NORTH FACING WINDOWS

Image: Sustainability Victoria

## Top 3 ways to heat-proof your home

### 1. [Protect your windows from heat](#)

Windows – the glass and the frames – let heat from outside into your home. Shutters or external blinds on windows hit by the sun can make your home more comfortable in hot weather, especially if they keep the sun off the windows all day. Deciduous plants block summer sunlight on a window and let it through in winter. Low-cost temporary shading, like matchstick blinds hung outside the window, can work well.

Curtains and other internal window coverings don't work as well as external blinds, but do help keep heat out. You want to create a still air space between the covering and the window, trapping the heat. Heavy floor-length drapes with pelmets work best, but any increase in the thickness of your curtains will help.

### 2. [Improve your ceiling insulation](#)

It is relatively easy and cheap to get insulation installed if your ceiling space is accessible. This job is best done by a professional installer. Use insulation with a minimum value of R3.5. Cover as much of the ceiling as possible – even a small uninsulated area will let hot air in. If your ceiling is already insulated, you can put more insulation on top.

### 3. [Seal gaps and cracks](#)

Gaps and cracks let heat into your home from outside. They are often hard to find, but simple and cheap to fix. Air can get in around **windows and doors**. **Exhaust fans** let in a lot of hot air, and in older homes, **wall or ceiling vents** can be the culprit. Your Scorecard assessor will help you find hidden gaps and suggest the most cost-effective ways to seal them.

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## Longer-term heat fixes

If you're planning renovations, even small ones, it's a great time to think about how you can make your home more resistant to hot summers.

### Insulate your walls

Heat travels through walls, and insulation slows the heat down. Walls are difficult to insulate, so it's best to do it while you are renovating. If you need to replace the lining or cladding of any walls, install insulation at the same time.

Talk to your Scorecard assessor about renovations, and about how 'thermal mass' (bricks and concrete) in the right place can help keep your house cool.

### Upgrade your windows

Windows let a lot of heat into your home on hot days, particularly if you have no way of shading them from the outside. Glass and frames – particularly metal frames – both conduct heat.

Deciding whether to replace windows is a complex matter, with a lot of factors to consider. A Scorecard assessor can help you figure out what kind of window and frame solutions will make the most sense for you.

## Some simple ways to stay cool without upgrading your home

- Keep doors closed between the hotter and cooler parts of your home, and spend as much time as possible in the cooler parts. Your Scorecard assessor can help you identify which parts of your house are easiest to keep cool.
- Keep sun off windows.
- Use fans before turning on the air conditioning.
- When it's cooler outside than inside, open windows and doors – this will usually be at night or early in the morning before a hot day. Put thermometers outside (in the shade) and inside to check when it is time to open the house.
- Avoid using the oven and stove on hot days – have a barbecue outside if you can, or use the microwave. Clothes dryers can pump hot air into a room, so dry clothes in the sun. Halogen lights also generate heat, so switch them off (and replace them with LEDs when you can).
- Only cool the room you're in, not the whole house, to keep energy use down. If you have ducted cooling, get the ducts cleaned and insulated so they don't leak cool air. If you're buying a new cooling device, look for one with lots of stars – it will be more energy efficient and cost less to run.

## What is the Victorian Residential Efficiency Scorecard?

The Scorecard is an Australian-first home energy rating program. Book a Scorecard assessment, and an accredited assessor will visit your home, look at its building features and fixed appliances, and generate a certificate showing an energy star rating, hot weather rating and energy efficiency features ratings. Your Scorecard assessment will give you advice on how to make your home more energy efficient, so you can stay cool in summer while keeping energy costs down.

To find out more about the Scorecard or to request an assessment, visit [www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/scorecard](http://www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/scorecard)