

Preparing your home for hot weather



Residential Efficiency Scorecard

The Scorecard is a home energy rating program.

An accredited assessor visits your home and looks at the building and fixed appliances. You receive a certificate with your home's energy star rating, comfort and appliance efficiency ratings.

Your Scorecard assessor gives you advice on making your home more comfortable. They make your next steps simple, so you don't miss out on energy bill savings.

To find out more about the Scorecard or to find an assessor, visit www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/scorecard

How can Scorecard help you prepare for hot weather?

Figuring out how to keep your home cool can be complicated, and good 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 manage hot conditions more safely.

A home with a low hot weather rating is relatively hard to keep cool without using cooling appliances.

The Scorecard certificate gives you options to help your home perform better in hot weather with or without cooling.

A high-rated home stays cool for longer when the power goes out. When the power is on, the home uses less electricity, reducing energy bills and producing less strain on the energy system on hot days.

Keeping cool

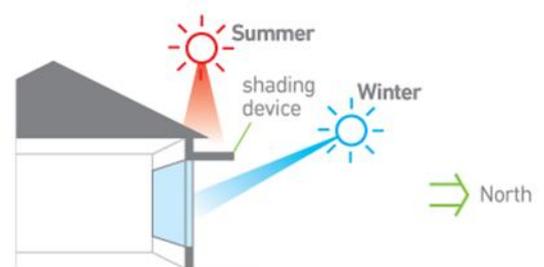
Exposure to excessive heat may not be good for your health. You may sleep poorly, and heat creates risks for some medical conditions.

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 windows, even when they're closed. Heat also travels through the roof and walls.
- Keeping your home cool often takes a combination of smart behaviour, simple changes and bigger home upgrades.

Top 3 ways to heat-proof your home

1. Protect your windows from heat



SHADE NORTH FACING WINDOWS

Image: Sustainability Victoria

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. See if you can keep the sun off the windows all day.

Deciduous plants can block summer sunlight on a window and let it through in winter. Low-cost temporary shading, like matchstick blinds hung outside the window, can also work well.

Curtains and other window coverings do help, although not as much as external blinds. Aim to create a still air space between the covering and the window, trapping the heat. Heavy, lined, floor-length curtains with pelmets, honeycomb blinds or Roman blinds work best, but any thick curtains will help.

2. Improve your ceiling insulation

Cover as much of the ceiling as possible – even a small uninsulated area will let heat in. If your ceiling is insulated, you can put more insulation on top. It can be easy and cheap to get insulation installed if your ceiling space is accessible. This job is best done by a professional installer. In general, use insulation with a minimum value of R3.5. In hotter climates reflective insulation may be a good option. Consult your local insulation professional for more information.

3. Seal gaps and cracks

Gaps and cracks let heat into your home. They can be hard to find, but simple and cheap to fix. Air can get in around windows and doors and under skirting boards. 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.

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 comfortable in hot weather.

Look at the hot weather comfort rating on your Scorecard certificate. The more bars the better your home is. Look at the improvement options to improve the rating. Ask your assessor for more detailed advice.



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. A good time is when you replace the lining or cladding of any walls.

Add thermal mass

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

Upgrade your windows

Windows let a lot of heat into your home, particularly if you can't shade them from the outside. Glass and frames, particularly metal frames, let heat in. Double glazing will not prevent heat entering your house if the sun directly hits the glass.

Deciding whether to replace windows can be complex, with a lot of factors to consider. A Scorecard assessor can help you figure out the best solutions for you.

Simple ways to stay cool

- 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 find out which parts of your house are easiest to keep cool.
- Keep the sun off windows and walls.
- Use fans before turning on the air conditioning as fans are cheaper to run.
- 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. Use an indoor/outdoor thermometer to check when it is time to open the house.
- Avoid using the oven and stove on hot days – have a barbecue outside or use the microwave. Clothes dryers can pump a lot of hot air inside, 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 to keep energy use down. Clean cooler filters regularly to improve efficiency. 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.

For more information

Find out more about Scorecard and take look at the other fact sheets in this series

www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/scorecard