

Questions and Answers: BC Hydro Home Air Conditioning Program

1. **Question:** Why has the province announced an air conditioner program?

Answer: Extreme heat emergencies can cause significant health challenges for vulnerable people and that's why Government has taken steps to better prepare the province and the health-care system. The air conditioner program, together with other health emergency supports, were taken following engagement with vulnerable populations, emergency planners and other stakeholders to understand how to better protect people most at-risk to injury and death during extreme heat emergencies.

2. **Question:** Who is eligible for the air conditioning program?

Answer: Low-income individuals, families and seniors (over 65) and those residents who are referred through the regional health authorities home health programs that meet medically heat vulnerable criteria.

3. **Question:** Are FortisBC and customers in New Westminster, City of Nelson and City of Penticton able to access the program?

Answer: Yes, residents living in New Westminster are eligible. An expression of interest form is available for FortisBC Electric, City of Nelson and City of Penticton customers to complete so they may be advised when the offer is available in their service territory. The form is at [Air conditioner offer for FortisBC customers \(bchydro.com\)](https://www.bchydro.com/energy-conservation/energy-coaching/air-conditioner-offer).

4. **Question:** How do I apply for the air conditioner installation?

Answer: Here is the link to apply: [Free product installation and energy coaching \(bchydro.com\)](https://www.bchydro.com/energy-conservation/energy-coaching). The air conditioner is one of the products available through the Energy Conservation Assistance program – participants that live in a single-family home, duplex or townhouse may also receive energy saving products such as efficient shower heads, light bulbs, draft proofing and some may be eligible for fridge replacement and/or insulation upgrades (these additional upgrades are not available for condos and apartments). All products and services are provided at no cost.

5. **Question:** How do I apply if I live in a condo or apartment?

Answer:

- [Apply online](#). Have your proof of income document and your BC Hydro account number ready.
- If you rent your home, you'll also need to submit a Landlord Consent Form.
- In the application, you'll be asked which program you want to apply for. Select "Energy Conservation Assistance Program (ECAP)".
- Enter your annual income and household details and then select "Air conditioner offer".
- Once you're approved, an energy coach will contact you within two to three weeks to schedule a home visit and confirm that an air conditioner is suitable for your home. In some instances, a follow-up visit may be required to install the air conditioner.

6. **Question:** What's the process for getting my AC unit after applying?

Answer:

- Once your application is approved, you'll hear from our approved program contractor within 1-2 weeks to schedule a home visit.
- During the visit, the energy coach will assess your home to determine if its compatible with an AC.
- There may be situations where not all customers that are approved will receive an AC unit. This will be determined by the energy coach based on the individual home characteristics.
- In some instances, a follow-up visit may be required to install the AC unit.

7. **Question:** What is medically heat vulnerable? How do I qualify?

Answer: Medical eligibility for the AC program is based on vulnerability criteria developed by the Ministry of Health in consultation with the BCCDC and will operate on a referral basis through the home health program and with the community health nurses working in First Nations communities.

8. **Question:** Who qualifies for low income and how is it verified?

Answer: To ensure that air conditioners are provided to those that need them most, the application process is income tested through BC Hydro's Energy Conservation Assistance Program. Customers will need to provide proof of income for each member of your household aged 18 or older. Here is the link to identify eligibility for low-income [Free product installation and energy coaching \(bchydro.com\)](#).

9. **Question:** If I get an air conditioner installed how much additional will it cost me for hydro monthly?

Answer: Here is a link to assess costs [Appliance cost calculator \(bchydro.com\)](#). If you have an online BC Hydro account you can also track and compare your usage with the electricity tracking tools available in MyHydro, view your online bills, and manage your payments.

Helpful tip: minimizing use of your air conditioner will keep operating costs low, use as a safety measure when temperature is 27 or above; recommend setting cooling temperature to 25 degrees.

10. **Question:** Do I need a BC Hydro account to access the program?

Answer: A BC Hydro account is required for an online application. If you do not have a BC Hydro account, please complete the paper application form and indicate "no BCH account" in the account field. The paper application is available [online](#) under the "How to apply" section at www.bchydro.com/ecap.

11. **Question:** If I am a tenant, do I need to get my landlords permission to install an air conditioner? If I need permission what is the process?

Answer: Yes, you will need permission from your landlord by submitting a completed Landlord Consent Form with your application. Here is a link to obtain permission from your landlord [Energy Conservation Assistance Program \(ECAP\) Landlord consent \(bchydro.com\)](#)

12. **Question:** If I am eligible when can I expect to have an air conditioner installed?

Answer: Once applications are approved, customers will be contacted in 1-2 weeks to schedule a site visit. A certified contractor will assess if the home is suitable for an AC unit. In some instances, a follow-up visit may be required to install the AC unit.

13. **Question:** If I am in a building with a strata do I need to get permission for the installation of an air conditioner if I meet the criteria? If so, how do I get permission?

Answer: Before applying, participants must check with their Stratas that they can install an air conditioner.

14. **Question:** Am I eligible if I have an AC unit in my home already?

No, you're not eligible if you have a functioning AC unit in your home. If you have a unit that's completely non-functioning, you may be eligible for a new one. Your old unit will be removed and recycled properly.

15. **Question:** What other programs are available for air conditioners if I do not meet the criteria for this program?

Answer: BC Hydro is offering \$50 off select energy-efficient portable or window air conditioners from June 2 to July 28. Here is the link to advise you of the rebate program [Air conditioners \(bchydro.com\)](http://bchydro.com)

16. **Question:** Are residents in non-profit housing complexes able to apply for air conditioning installations through this program?

Answer: Yes, individuals living in non-profit societies may apply. For customers who don't have their own BC Hydro account, please complete a paper application. The paper application can be found under the How to Apply section at www.bchydro.com/ECAP.

17. **Question:** Is it possible to install air conditioners in shared space for use by all residents in a multi-tenanted building?

Answer: The program is intended to provide air conditioners for single family detached dwellings, townhomes, rowhomes, duplexes, manufactured and mobile homes, and apartments/condos. The program isn't providing air conditioners in common areas at this time.

18. **Question:** What kind of air conditioner will I get?

Answer:

- The air conditioning offer is for one portable air conditioning unit.
- Window-mount options may be available depending on home characteristics.
- The offer does not include central, ducted air conditioning units.

19. **Question:** Who will install the AC if it needs installation?

Answer: The unit will be installed by a qualified professional.

20. **Question:** How many air conditioners will I get? Why am I only getting one?

Answer:

- Each eligible household will receive one portable air conditioner, which will be installed by a qualified professional.
- The free air conditioner is being provided as a safety device, which can be installed in a single room to ensure safety during extreme weather events, rather than sized to provide comfort in the whole home. Small air conditioner units will also help keep energy bills low.

21. **Question:** How many air conditioners will be installed in B.C.?

Answer: It is expected that 8,000 air conditioning units will be installed over the next three years.

22. **Question:** What other resources are available to help me prepare for heat events?

Answer: The BC Centre for Disease Control has “Preparing for Heat Events” resources available on their [website](#).