



Air conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat related illness and death. Ensure your home is ready to provide the necessary cool, protective environment you will need during extreme heat situations.

Before Excessive Heat Situations

- **Prepare your air conditioning system.**
 - Keep your air conditioner maintained properly; this will ensure it is able to work when you need it most.
 - Have your air conditioning system checked each year.
 - Check air-conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
 - Install window air conditioners snugly; insulate if necessary.
 - Keep your air conditioner in the shade. If your air conditioner is already in the sun, you can build a wood shade screen for it — but do not block the air flow.
- **Prepare your home.**
 - Weather-strip doors and windows to keep the cool air inside your home.
 - Install temporary window reflectors (e.g., aluminum foil-covered cardboard) to reflect heat back outside.
 - Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades, awnings, or louvers; this can reduce the heat that enters a home by up to 80 percent.
 - Keep storm windows up all year.
- **Prepare for power outages.**
 - High summertime temperatures increase energy demand for cooling; overloaded energy systems can result in power outages.
 - For more information see the Power Outage handouts in this manual.

During Excessive Heat Situations

- **Reduce indoor heat.**
 - Close window coverings on the west side of the home to keep out the hot afternoon sun.
 - Cool only the rooms you use, but do not close all your vents - closing too many vents actually reduces operating efficiency.
 - Run the oven, dishwasher, washing machine and clothes dryer early in the morning or later in the evening to reduce adding heat during the hottest part of the day.
- **If you do not have an air conditioner,**
 - **Daytime:** Open at least two windows and place a fan in the window so it blows air out of the house; this will create airflow through the house
 - **Nighttime:** Turn the fan around to draw cooler air into the house.
- **Improve ventilation.**
 - Use a small electric fan to improve ventilation and comfort.
 - Use ceiling fans to circulate air.

After Excessive Heat Situations

- **Home improvements can make your home more prepared for extreme heat events.**
 - Use landscaping to provide shade for west-facing walls.
 - Consider replacing old windows. Storm or dual-glazed windows can reduce heat gain by as much as 50 percent.
 - Install additional insulation, which can help keep heat out in the summer as well as keep heat in during the winter months.
 - Use attic fans to help clear the hottest air from the home.

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