

News Release - Heat Wave Relief for Tenants

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TORONTO: Councillor Mary Fragedakis is concerned about various reports that tenants are having their air conditioning units taken away by their landlords.

Tenants in apartment buildings, especially those without central air conditioning, have a lot of difficulties keeping their units cool. Extreme heat can pose serious health risks – like heat stroke and even death. In Europe in 2003, there were over 50,000 heat wave related deaths.

"We have a lot of challenges when it comes to Toronto's aging apartment buildings. We cannot abandon tenants and we should not be putting their health at risk," said Councillor Fragedakis.

Councillor Fragedakis has heard disturbing reports that some landlords are telling tenants City inspectors are the ones calling for the removal of air conditioning units.

She has been advised that City inspectors – from Municipal Licensing and Standards – do not issue orders for removal of air-conditioning units. Inspectors can require that a unit be safely and securely installed.

Tenants who have questions about this can call 311 or email 311@toronto.ca.

"Tenants are able to install air conditioners as part and parcel of their reasonable enjoyment of their apartment. Tenants are pleased the city is looking into other measures such as requiring cooling rooms during heat waves and providing incentives to retrofit aging buildings with roof coating and window films," says Geordie Dent, Executive Director of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations. About half of all Torontonians are tenants.

How to solve the problem of over-heated apartments was discussed at both the Tenant Issues Committee meeting and at the Toronto Board of Health in June of 2015. The Board of Health Report - *Reducing Health Risk from Extreme Heat in Apartment Buildings* – warns heat waves are only going to get worse due to climate change. That report lists a number of pilot projects in other cities that attempt to cool buildings in a more energy efficient manner.

"I find encouragement in the building cooling pilot projects going on around the world. We need to develop a long term strategy here that is both good for tenants and good for the environment," said Councillor Fragedakis.