

## Keeping Cool without Stressing the Planet

### Why we care

It's HOT out there! The triple-digit weather of July's West Coast heat wave resulted in utility customers consuming power at record levels. Nationally, air conditioners consume 43% of the peak power load on hot afternoons. Aside from increasing demand on the power grid, air conditioners typically use HCFC-22, a refrigerant that is damaging to the ozone layer. Fortunately, there are ways to keep cool without stressing the planet.

### Simple, positive change

- Install a ceiling fan to create breezes. Electricity use is small—like that of a light bulb.
- Open windows during the cool part of the day and seal off the house during the hottest times. Close draperies or shades on windows that are exposed to sun.
- Save heat-producing tasks such as showering, cooking, and doing laundry for cooler parts of the day.
- Upgrade insulation, weather stripping, and caulking help keep out the summer heat.
- Shade your home with awnings, louvers, trees, or install solar shade film on windows. Shading can reduce indoor temperatures by as much as 20 degrees.
- Consider a whole-house fan or 2-stage evaporative cooler, which are more energy efficient than a central air conditioner.
- If you have an air conditioner, use it in combination with a fan to lessen its workload, and set the temperature above 78° when away from home.
- If you do purchase an air conditioner, look for Energy Star models and R410 refrigerant, which is less damaging to the ozone layer. High efficiency models qualify for tax credits.

**Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at [jeanne@earthleaders.org](mailto:jeanne@earthleaders.org).**