

Here are some tips for keeping your house warm as cheaply and efficiently as possible.

Reduce your heating needs

Before purchasing a heater, consider the following:

- insulate ceilings, skylights, walls and raised floors to save up to 40% on heating bills
- seal gaps in floors, windows, walls and ceilings. Use a draft excluder for under doors
- open curtains and blinds to let the winter sun in during the day and close them at night to keep the heat inside. Heavy curtains work best and pelmets help create a layer of insulating air between the window and the curtain
- place a cosy mat over tiled surfaces
- select deciduous plants that allow winter sun in from northern, western and eastern sides and help shade the house from the summer sun
- place thermostats in the rooms used most often, away from sources of heat and cold. Keep thermostat temperatures between 18°C and 20°C. Each degree of extra heating increases energy consumption by about 5% to 10%.

Choosing a home heating solution

If you decide you need a heater, consider the:

- cost and ease of its operation
- maintenance required to keep it in good working order
- health impacts and potential for nuisance, such as smoke or noise
- energy efficiency rating
- correct size and location of the heater for your room/house.

There are quite a few options which you will need to investigate to get the right one for your space.

1. Space heating options, such as oil-filled column heaters, electric or gas heaters and reverse-cycle air conditioners, are designed to heat an area, rather than a whole home. Installing individual space heaters in different rooms of a home according to your needs gives you greater heating flexibility.
2. Be aware that Council recommends that gas space heaters are flued to the outside to avoid dangerous pollutants inside your home.
3. Reverse-cycle air conditioners with a 5 or 6 star energy rating are one of the most efficient and economical options.
4. Zoned heating options, such as ducted, hydronic, in-slab or electric thin film heating, are large heaters that are capable of heating most of your home at one time. To help you control your heating and reduce running costs, all large central heating systems should be zoned, otherwise you will be using energy to heat rooms which are not being used.

Wood heaters

Wood heaters emit smoke and odour which can expose you and your neighbours to harmful chemicals similar to those in cigarette smoke and create a nuisance in your neighbourhood. For this reason, Council does not recommend wood heaters in the urban environment.

It is your responsibility to install, operate and maintain the heater correctly to prevent smoke annoying neighbours. Causing a smoke nuisance can incur a fine under the Queensland *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

Air Pollution - Home heating options

Before buying a wood heater or if you already own one, visit www.lgtoolbox.qld.gov.au to read the [guide to operating a wood heater](#) for important information on choosing, installing and operating a wood heater.

If you are after the look and feel of a wood heater, consider installing a gas imitation wood heater that doesn't emit harmful smoke into the neighbourhood.

Wood heater complaints

If you have a neighbour with a nuisance wood heater, in the first instance you should talk with them and let them know your concerns. If there is still an issue, you can keep a log of the details, including how often the smoke is occurring, how it affects you, how severe it is and how long it lasts. You can contact Council to register a complaint.

More information

For further information on reducing smoke pollution or other air quality initiatives visit www.lgtoolbox.qld.gov.au

References

Brisbane City Council. (2017, January 20). Home heating options. Brisbane, Australia. Retrieved from <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/environment-waste/be-clean-green-brisbane/green-homes/home-heating-options>

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