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## Condo Smarts

Headline: Heat Pumps

Topic: Electrical Planning Reports

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**Dear Tony:** Our strata has voted on replacing our failing roof top air system with a heat pump so we have cooling in the summer as well as winter operations. One of our owners at the meeting raised a number of questions regarding the installation of the new system and whether there are increased electrical demands or other issues. We were advised that the contractor would be managing these issues for us. Our building is 30 years old and many owners are now questioning whether this is being handled correctly.

*Neal Borden. Vancouver*

**Dear Neal:** Heat pump conversions are an excellent option to manage a stable climate within your building common areas, which will reduce cooling demands in homes as well. The new generations of heat pumps have greatly reduced noise levels, energy demands, and higher performance levels. There are however a number of issues that must be addressed before your community proceeds with the upgrade, including the building/electrical permit requirements through Technical Safety BC and local governments.

Electrical demand will be substantially higher than your gas fired system. At this time it would be valuable for your strata to be an early purchaser and have an electrical planning report completed. Reports are mandatory for strata corporations of 5 units or more by December 31, 2026 or 2028 depending on your location. The report provides an evaluation of your current electrical demands, capacity available and future capacity considerations such as EV charging, boiler conversions, and in unit heat pumps.

The conversion is often more complex than presented by service providers. There will be changes in weight and structural capacity and the structural capacity of your building. Electrical demand, drainage of condensation,

noise and vibration suppression, impacts to roofing systems and seismic risks must also be addressed. The capacity of air flow and frequency may also be insufficient and should be addressed at the same time. For multifamily or commercial buildings I recommend an independent mechanical/electrical consultant set the specifications for the conversion and supervise the work. This is a significant investment and upgrade for buildings. Remember, get every detail and condition in writing. Clean BC has an active list of contractors to get your community started.

<https://www.betterhomesbc.ca/iqp-registered-contractors/>