

HONG KONG

Summer nights in Hong Kong subdivided flats can feel like 44°C, survey finds

Two concern groups – CarbonCare InnoLab and the Kwai Chung Subdivided Units Kai Fong Association – urged the government to provide a hot weather allowance to ease the financial burden of electricity costs on low-income residents.

by **KELLY HO**

13:55, 11 AUGUST 2025

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Summer nights in Hong Kong's subdivided flats can feel as hot as 44°C during the sweltering month of July, a survey by local concern groups has found.



Residents living in “inadequate housing,” such as subdivided flats and rooftop or podium units, suffer from health problems due to extreme heat worsened by high humidity, according to a [survey](#) released on Sunday by CarbonCare InnoLab and the Kwai Chung Subdivided Units Kai Fong Association.

The two organisations surveyed 31 households in Kwai Chung between July 3 and 23, during which the Hong Kong Observatory issued the very hot weather warning 15 times and recorded nine “hot nights.”

The survey showed that during the day, the average maximum temperature in inadequate housing reached 30.8°C, with the highest hitting 39.9°C – up to 10°C hotter than the Observatory’s citywide daily average of 29.6°C.

Conditions were worse at night, with average maximum temperatures ranging from 29.6°C to 31°C, and the highest apparent temperature — the temperature perceived by humans — climbing to 44°C.

The average humidity inside the surveyed households was over 72 per cent, raising the apparent temperature to a warning level, the study found.



Kei pays HK\$2,200 every month for this 20-sq-ft coffin home. Photo: Kyle Lam/HKFP.

Over 70 per cent of respondents said the extreme heat left them feeling fatigued, with frequent heat-related symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, and heart palpitations.

Seventy-four per cent said they woke up earlier than usual due to the heat, while more than 60 per cent were unable to fall asleep at all. The impact of sleep deprivation was particularly pronounced among manual labourers, the survey said.

The concern groups urged the government to provide a hot weather allowance to ease the financial burden on low-income residents, after 65 per cent of respondents cited electricity costs as a reason for not using air-conditioning frequently during extreme heat.

They also proposed identifying and adding more community cooling centres to allow residents of subdivided flats to take shelter conveniently during heatwaves.

Hong Kong has an estimated 110,000 subdivided units housing around 220,000 residents, according to authorities. NGOs have long highlighted the cramped living conditions and poor fire safety standards in many such units.

In last year's policy address, Chief Executive John Lee introduced the [Basic Housing Units framework](#) aimed at phasing out substandard subdivided units.

The survey released on Sunday suggested that the government's framework should also require landlords to provide air-conditioning in these units. It further noted that many tenants have been overcharged for water and electricity.

The groups called for the bill to include enforcement measures to deter such abuses.