

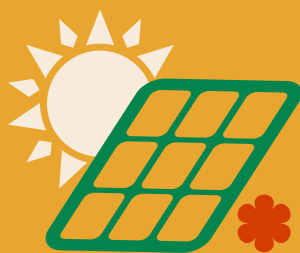
# What is an urban heat island?

Urban areas, where buildings, roads, and other infrastructure are highly concentrated and greenery is limited, become “islands” of higher temperatures relative to outlying areas. These pockets of heat are referred to as “**heat islands.**”



**Elevated temperatures from urban heat islands can affect a community’s environment and quality of life in multiple ways.**

## Increased energy consumption



Urban heat islands increase the demand for air conditioning to cool buildings and overall electricity demand.

## Elevated emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases

Increased use of fossil-fuel-powered plants increases air pollutants and the emissions of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, which contribute to global climate change.

## Compromised human health and comfort

Urban heat islands contribute to heat-related deaths and heat-related illnesses such as general discomfort, respiratory difficulties, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and non-fatal heat stroke.

## Impaired water quality

Rapid temperature changes in aquatic ecosystems resulting from warm stormwater runoff can be particularly stressful, and even fatal to aquatic life.

<https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/learn-about-heat-islands>

