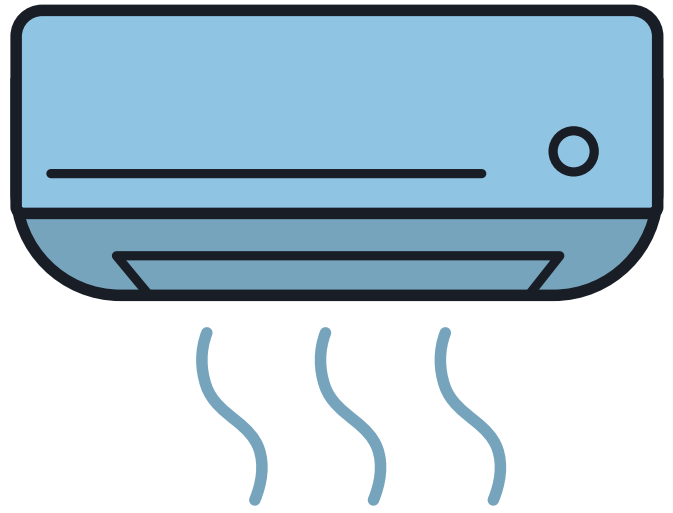




THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

AFTER-HOURS HVAC SCHEDULING

Executive Summary

This comprehensive guide is designed for commercial real estate owners, facility managers, asset managers, and tenants who need to understand, implement, or optimize after-hours HVAC programs. Whether you're calculating fair rates, drafting lease clauses, or ensuring NABERS compliance, this guide provides practical solutions to common AHAC challenges.

Who Is This Guide For?

- **FMs** - Calculate fair rates and manage tenant requests efficiently
- **Asset Managers** - Maximise building revenue & maintain tenant satisfaction
- **Property Owners** - Understand cost recovery and legal requirements
- **Tenants** - Know your rights and understand billing practices
- **Lease Advisors** - Draft effective AHAC clauses and negotiate fair terms

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Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Fair Rate Calculation:** Include energy costs, depreciation, and administrative expenses for accurate pricing
- ✓ **Legal Compliance:** Proper lease documentation protects both landlords and tenants
- ✓ **Automation Benefits:** Modern systems reduce errors, save time, and improve tenant satisfaction
- ✓ **Proven Results:** Real-world case studies demonstrate 38% energy reductions and improved NABERS ratings
- ✓ **NABERS v5.2 Compliance:** AHAC now requires Owner-Tenant Agreement (OTA) hours method

What is After Hours HVAC?

Definition

After-Hours HVAC (AHAC) is the delivery and maintenance of a facility's heating and air conditioning services outside regular operating hours for the benefit of tenants.

Tenants typically pay an hourly rate (specified in their lease) for costs associated with after-hours HVAC operation. After-hours periods normally include evenings, weekends, and holidays.



AHAC Charges

Usually the first question a property owner asks is “How much do I charge?” Most tenants and their lease advisors insist that AHAC charges represent a reasonable estimate of the “actual cost” for providing after-hours service.

However, calculating a “reasonable” estimate is often difficult because providing AHAC service requires many resources beyond electricity. To charge for after-hours HVAC, managers often determine a fixed energy rate then add a small percentage to cover equipment depreciation and administrative costs.

Common Terms

After-hours HVAC goes by various names depending on the market:

- Overtime HVAC
- After-hours air conditioning
- After-hours air con
- After-hours AC
- AHAC

After-Hours Billing

Billing tenants for AHAC takes several forms. Most property managers start the billing cycle the day the lease is executed. AHAC hours are charged at the agreed rate and billed to the tenant when they make a request.

Other facility managers may allot a number of free overtime AC hours for the term of the lease (e.g., 300 hours for 5 years). In that instance, an AHAC charge only begins if the tenant exceeds those cumulative free hours.

Tenants can be billed for AHAC on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis. AHAC charges are always billed separately from normal operating hour utility expenses to avoid double-charging tenants.

Lease Stipulations

Property owners typically include AHAC agreements in their leases. The core purpose of most clauses is to establish after-hours times and rates, but other provisions are often included.

To ensure quality service, most leases stipulate tenants must give advanced notice before requesting service (e.g., 48 hours). This notice ensures engineers and staff have time to carry out requests.

Another stipulation might further refine “AHAC times” by listing specific holidays or “dates of observation” when AHAC is available. Other lease provisions protect the landlord against operational expense losses. For example, companies often reserve the right to conduct an annual review of the AHAC rate and make adjustments based on current market prices for utilities. This stipulation protects against the annual volatility of energy prices.

Key Points Checklist

- ☒ Define AHAC clearly in all documentation
- ☒ Establish normal operating hours
- ☒ Set advance notice requirements
- ☒ Include rate review provisions
- ☒ Specify holiday availability





Calculating AHAC Rates

After-hours HVAC charges are a complex operational expense budget item. Normal core hour rates are predictable—power providers determine your property's kWh costs. But with after-hours AC, managers must calculate the hourly rate themselves, and this work needs to be done correctly to recoup your full utility outlay.

Case Study Insight: 152 Fanshawe Street achieved a 38% reduction in after-hours HVAC energy consumption through automated scheduling and precise billing. [See full results](#)

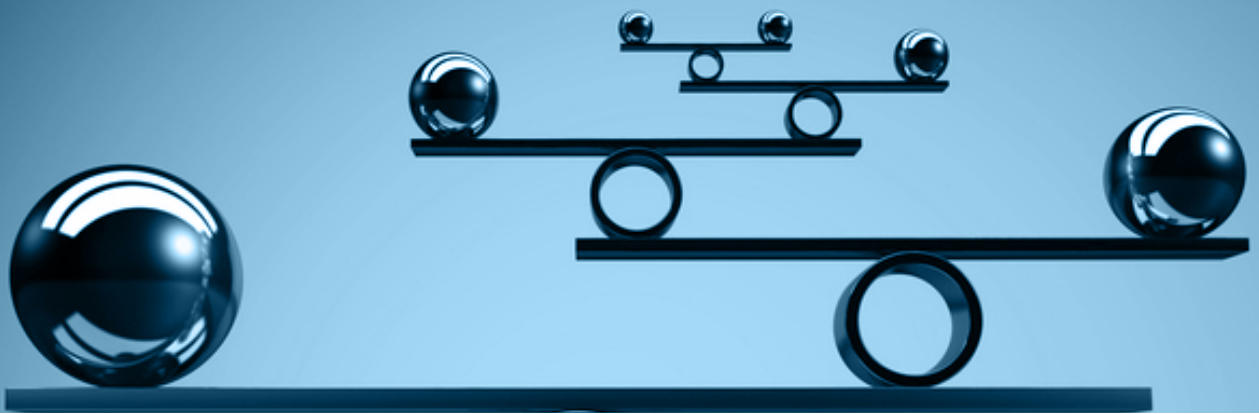
What to Include in an AHAC Rate

Most AHAC rates need to include more than electricity for chillers and boilers. Consider your HVAC system's fixed energy cost, but also other resources and services you provide. Lock in these costs early to give your calculation process focus and direction.

When calculating your AHAC rate, start with the most obvious expenses and work toward more granular items. Go as far as practicable for your situation. Some guesswork is inevitable, but at least identify each hard cost.

If you're managing office space, your tenants may need access to lift services, parking, and hallway lighting. If you're a university, you may need to add security and cleaning services to the charge.

Managers who manually operate their AHAC programs will need to include administrative fees for managing requests, invoicing, programming the building management system, and handling cancellations.



Fixed Energy Costs: Strike a Balance

To recoup as much of your energy expenses as possible, you'll need a close estimate of the actual energy used by your plant. But counting every kWh can be complex, costly, and time-consuming. In contrast, energy estimates that wildly miss the mark can cost you in lost profits and tenants.

The simplest (least accurate) calculation method would be to divide your annual energy bill by the number of standard operating hours per year. It's a simple process, but the resulting estimate lumps every kWh into the same basket. It tells you how much it costs to operate your property, not your plant. This lack of kWh discrimination could result in under- or over-charging tenants and making your property less profitable.

On the other hand, you could attempt to record your plant's actual kWh usage in real time. Smart meters and energy management system equipment give real-time feedback, but they can be expensive and complex to integrate.

When calculating your fixed energy costs, strive for an approach that balances accuracy with simplicity and affordability.

"When calculating your fixed energy costs, strive for an approach that balances accuracy with simplicity and affordability."

Adding Depreciation

Including accelerated depreciation will likely depend on the complexity of your HVAC system and budget. After-hours AC requests do shorten the lifespan of your equipment, so it's smart to consider including it in your AHAC rate.

Keep in mind there are few cheap and easy methods for calculating depreciation, but it may be worth the investment for some owners.

One way to manually calculate depreciation is to research ASHRAE reported estimates for each piece of equipment, but this can be time-consuming for complex HVAC systems. Some asset management software use built-in ASHRAE reporting to predict equipment life cycles. These programs can be helpful guides.

Hiring third-party experts like mechanical engineers to calculate your hourly rate is another option, but expertise comes at a price.

Whatever method you choose, justify your decision to tenants by pointing out that after-hours operation shortens the lifespan of your equipment. You'll need those funds for preventive maintenance and to ensure a comfortable building environment for tenants.



Key Points Checklist

- ☒ Include all relevant energy costs
- ☒ Account for auxiliary services (lifts, lighting)
- ☒ Add depreciation allowance
- ☒ Include administrative costs
- ☒ Balance accuracy with practicality

Worked Example: Calculating Your Fixed Rate

Building:

- 50 kW chiller system
- Coefficient of Performance (COP) = 4
- Electricity cost = \$0.20/kWh
- Additional equipment: 2 x 15 kW Air Handling Unit

Calculation:

- 50 kW chiller system
- Coefficient of Performance (COP) = 4
- Electricity cost = \$0.20/kWh
- Additional equipment: 2 x 15 kW Air Handling Unit

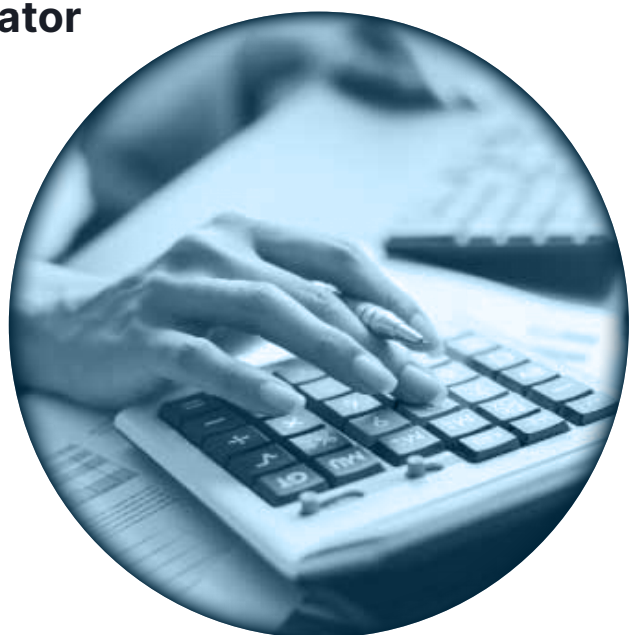
Add depreciation (10%) and admin costs (15%):

- Total hourly rate: $\$8.50 \times 1.25 = \textbf{\$10.63/hour}$

7NOX After-Hours Rate Calculator

The 7NOX After-Hours Rate Calculator is a **free, web-based tool** designed to help building owners, asset managers, and facilities teams quickly estimate an appropriate fixed AHAC rate. By inputting basic details like energy tariffs, system capacity, and admin overhead, you can generate a transparent, NABERS-aligned rate in minutes — no spreadsheet wrangling required.

[Calculate Your AHAC Rate](#)





Legal and Lease Guidance

After-hours HVAC is a complex topic, and each property requires a customized solution. However, there are basic terms and ideas that appear in most agreements regardless of your circumstances or location. While you should always consult a legal professional when drafting leases, the following tips and topics will help get the ball rolling.

Define “AHAC”

Ensure you have a clear and unambiguous definition of after-hours HVAC. Use a term that's common for your area. With a little research, you can locate the preferred name for your market. But regardless of the term used, be consistent to avoid confusing your tenants.*

Sample Clause (Plain Language): “After-Hours HVAC means heating and cooling services provided outside normal business hours (8 AM - 6 PM, Monday-Friday, excluding holidays). The tenant will pay \$X per hour for each hour of service requested.”*

Sample Clause (Formal): “After-Hours HVAC Services shall mean the operation of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems serving the Premises outside the Standard Operating Hours as defined herein, for which Tenant shall pay Landlord the prevailing rate as established annually and set forth in Schedule [X] attached hereto.”*

List Normal Hours of Operation

Operating hours for a property are usually stated within the lease, but it's good practice to remind tenants in all communications. Using a simple table that lists times and days for each floor, tenant, and/or zone can be an effective reminder.

**Legal Disclaimer: Local tenancy legislation can override lease language. Always seek local legal review for your specific jurisdiction.*

Example: Normal Hours of Operation

Level	Mon-Fri	Saturday	Sunday
Ground	8:00 AM - 6:00 PM	8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Closed
Level 1	8:00 AM - 6:00 PM	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Level 2	8:00 AM - 6:00 PM	8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Closed

By definition, any HVAC usage outside normal operating hours is considered AHAC and will be charged as such to the requesting tenant.

Remember to mention specific days outside the scope of operating hours, like holidays. If you don't plan to make AHAC available to all parts of your property, list those excluded areas in your lease and communications with tenants.

Explain Fixed Rate Calculation

Explain how you calculated the fixed energy rate that factors into your AHAC fee. If it was based on average energy cost across the entire property for a specific time, show how you prorated the amount.

Maybe your energy provider calculated the hourly cost for you. If so, briefly explain how this process worked. If you estimated the hourly energy based on equipment involved, list these HVAC assets for the tenant. Such assets might include chillers, air handling units, variable air volume boxes, and fan coil units.

Your tenants will appreciate that you've done due diligence in calculating the actual energy expenses for which you're charging them. Such reassurance is beneficial when billing issues surface.



Show How to Calculate AHAC

Demonstrate the actual formula for calculating the AHAC monthly charge. Examples clear up the process for your tenants. At minimum, your AHAC charge will include the following elements:

$$\text{Fixed Rate} \times \text{Number of Operating Hours} = \text{AHAC Charges}$$

At this point in the lease, record the amount of the AHAC hourly charge (e.g., \$25 per hour).

Example: Tenant A used 10 hours of after-hours HVAC for the month at a rate of \$25/hour. Their total charge would be \$250.

Including Depreciation

If you include accelerated depreciation in your fixed energy rate or AHAC charges, add it to those sections as a line item or as part of the AHAC formula.

There are many ways to recoup depreciation losses. Some property owners make depreciation a separate charge, adding the fees to a general “building fund” that goes to maintain the property as a whole.

Excluded Costs

You may want to list any excluded HVAC equipment or service costs. These can include anything within your fixed energy rate calculation you’ve chosen not to include even though it’s an actual operating expense.

For example, your chiller uses water for heat rejection, but it may be impractical or impossible to get an accurate measurement. Therefore,

you may end up omitting water usage from the fixed rate calculation. Other omitted costs often include electricity for lighting hallways, car parks, and powering elevators.

An excluded equipment and services list may seem like overkill, but it shows tenants you’ve chosen to absorb some costs. This can help prevent future complaints about AHAC increases.

AHAC vs Annual Operating Expenses

Keep after-hours HVAC charges separate from your annual operating expenses. There's potential that AHAC kWh usage is accidentally mixed with your normal end-of-year utilities bill to tenants. If this happens, you will end up charging tenants twice for the same energy usage.

Savvy tenants will anticipate this possibility of energy “double-dipping” and want reassurance from you. Prepare for these concerns by explaining that you've taken measures to ensure accuracy and fairness in your billing. It's the most effective way to avoid confusion down the road.

Risk Management Checklist

- ☒ Under-recovery of actual costs
- ☒ Tenant disputes over billing accuracy
- ☒ Equipment strain and premature failure
- ☒ NABERS compliance penalties
- ☒ Double-charging for energy usage



Key Points Checklist:

- ☒ Use clear, consistent terminology
- ☒ Provide sample calculations
- ☒ List excluded costs transparently
- ☒ Separate AHAC from annual OPEX
- ☒ Include rate review mechanisms

NABERS Compliance

Counting every kWh your property uses is important for your NABERS Energy Rating assessment. The more detailed your records, the more accurate your rating will be. Documenting AHAC hours can be tricky given they're usually tracked separately from normal operating hours.

Case Study Insight:

Automation contributed to a 5.5-star NABERS rating at 152 Fanshawe Street (up from 4.0 stars)
[See full results](#)



The following information comes from the [NABERS Energy and Water for Offices Rules v5.2 \(April 2025\)](#). These sections cover approved documentation relating to AHAC. The Rules are meant for NABERS assessors but can be helpful in preparing for an assessment.

CRITICAL: OTA Hours Requirement

Important: AHAC counts only with the OTA Hours method. NABERS v5.2 allows after-hours requests to be added only when your Core Hours are based on a written Owner-Tenant Agreement (OTA). If you used a Tenant Occupancy Survey, Default or Average Hours, no AHAC can be entered (see 5.3.3.1; restrictions reiterated in 5.3.4-5.3.6).

1-Hour Default Rule

Missing finish times = 1 hour maximum. If an AHAC request (or push-button log) lacks an explicit finish time, NABERS caps the request at 1 hour (5.3.3.3). Always ensure your booking system captures both start and end times.

Smallest Zone Attribution

Multi-zone requests default to smallest space. When one request starts plant for several floors/zones and the tenant didn't specify which area they need, NABERS attributes the request to the smallest affected space (5.3.3.4). Include zone tags in your booking form to maximize credit.

Documentation Requirements

Acceptable evidence includes: OTA showing comfort-condition hours, BMS start-up logs for at least one day in each season, and facility-manager confirmation where BMS data is incomplete. See 8.3.1 (OTA core hours) and 8.3.2 (AHAC evidence). Email requests alone are insufficient.

Rated Hours

NABERS assessors calculate the total number of hours per week your building is occupied—your rated hours. Assessors use your rated hours along with your annual kWh usage and other factors to determine your efficiency rating.

To calculate your rated hours, assessors look at your core hours—your normal operating hours per week (e.g., 8 AM to 6 PM). Core hours are usually listed within the owner/tenant agreement, and the assessor will likely use your agreement to help determine these.

Your HVAC system uses energy to produce the AHAC service, so those hours need to be counted too. Any missing AHAC hours skew your total rated hour count, lowering your NABERS rating.

The negative impact of omitting AHAC hours is why it's critical to keep accurate logs of tenant requests. For NABERS, not just any records will do either. Data must be deemed “acceptable” or it won't be included.

Default / Average Core Hours Restriction

Spaces using Default (45 h) or Average Core Hours cannot record AHAC or “unusual hours”. Obtain an OTA if you need to capture these hours (5.3.5-5.3.6).



If the OTA refers to plant run-times or wording is unclear and no BMS proof exists, deduct 2 h/day from the OTA core hours (see 5.3.2.1, Step 3). For tenancy & whole-building ratings NABERS also auto-deducts 5 h/week from OTA hours (5.3.2.2).

Tenant Requests

Section 5.3.3.1 of the NABERS Energy and Water for Offices Rules v5.2 (April 2025) addresses AHAC requests and acceptable documentation includes:

- OTA showing comfort-condition hours
- BMS start-up logs for at least one day in each season
- Facility-manager confirmation (where BMS data incomplete) (8.3.1)

An example of acceptable documentation might be an automated entry from an after-hours HVAC app that records date, time, floor, and tenant. Unacceptable documentation might be a tenant email listing only the requested date and time. The most important part of accurate documentation is the tenant's request, so keep this in mind when setting up your request process.

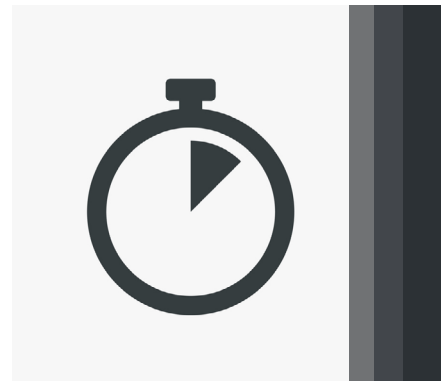
Overlapping Hours

To be considered rated hours, AHAC hours also can't overlap with your core hours. You'll need acceptable documentation showing their separation. Section 8.3.2 of the NABERS Energy and Water for Offices Rules v5.2 (April 2025) explains that to include AHAC hours, you must provide:

Evidence that no AHAC has been counted during the Core Hours and during the plant start-up period or the hour before the start of Core Hours if the plant start-up period is unknown.

After-Hours vs Start-Up Times

NABERS focuses heavily on counting only “comfort condition” hours—times when internal temperatures are appropriate for occupancy. Assessors assume that comfort conditions are not met during start-up time for your plant. For that reason, you can't count any AHAC hours that occur during start-up times for your system. If you can't provide evidence of actual run-up times for temperatures, assessors will assume one hour.



Example: Your owner/tenant agreement lists core hours from “8 AM to 6 PM.” Your normal plant start-up time begins at 7 AM to reach comfort conditions. Tenant A requests AHAC from 7 AM to 8 AM on Wednesday, but your start-up time for Wednesday stays at 7 AM (i.e., AHAC and start-up begin at the same time). Since your building isn't at “comfort conditions” by 7 AM on Wednesday, you can't count that AHAC hour toward your rated hours.





Zones and Functional Spaces

To calculate AHAC hours, NABERS assessors need to divide your net lettable area into functional spaces—specific areas of your building. Functional spaces can be based on tenancy distinctions (i.e., leases) or physical ones (e.g., HVAC zones), but variations often happen.

For example, multiple tenants could occupy the same functional space by leasing the same floor. In contrast, a single tenant might occupy separate functional spaces.

The goal of defining functional spaces is to group areas with the same periods of occupancy so assessors can calculate the effects of vacancies and different operational hours on your building's efficiency.

AHAC requests need to reference their correct functional spaces. This is especially important when multiple tenants share the same spaces. Accurate records and detailed building schematics are essential, and assessors will use them to calculate your rated hours.

Section 8.3.2 of the NABERS Energy and Water for Offices Rules v5.2 (April 2025) requires documentation in the form of:

“Drawings and measurements showing AHAC zones for requests serving different zones within a single functional space.”

If the NABERS assessor can't locate detailed areas for different AHAC zones, they will use the smallest area available or average hours together. Either way, the accuracy of your rated hours will be negatively impacted if there's guesswork involved.

Note: The rules around multiple tenants sharing functional spaces and zones can be complex. Read section 5.3.3 of the NABERS Energy and Water for Offices Rules v5.2 to see what situation fits your properties most closely.

“Drawings and measurements showing AHAC zones for requests serving different zones within a single functional space.”

Section 8.3.2 of the NABERS Energy and Water for Offices Rules v5.2

What's New in NABERS v5.2 (April 2025)

NABERS has tightened several rules that directly affect how you log Core Hours and claim After-Hours Air-Conditioning (AHAC). Use the checklist below to stay audit-proof.

Change in v5.2	Practical impact	Action for building teams
OTA Hours – 2 h/day deduction when the OTA doesn't explicitly cover plant start-up or shut-down times.	Your written Core Hours are automatically trimmed by 2 h/day in the rating input form.	Keep plant start-up/shut-down language in your OTA or provide BMS proof so the deduction doesn't apply.
OTA Hours – 5 h/week automatic correction (Tenancy & Whole-Building ratings).	NABERS now normalises OTA data against TOS data; five hours are removed each week.	Expect lower Core Hours if you rely on OTA only; capture AHAC requests accurately to claw hours back.
AHAC allowed only when Core Hours use the OTA method.	TOS, Default or Average Core Hours = no AHAC credits.	Ensure every tenant signs/updates an OTA if you need to log AHAC.
1-hour default duration if an AHAC request lacks an end time (unchanged wording but moved).	Incomplete records will be capped at 1 h.	Force "end-time required" in any push-button or app workflow.
Smallest-zone rule clarified for multi-zone requests.	One bulk request defaults to the smallest affected space unless specified.	Tag every AHAC trigger with a zone or floor ID.
Variable Core Hours entry method introduced.	You can now split Core Hours seasonally or by day-type inside the rating form.	Log changes (e.g., summer late shift) on a separate row in the NABERS spreadsheet.
AHAC evidence list moved to its own clause.	Proof requirements are now spelled out separately from Core Hours evidence.	Store tenant logs, BMS extracts and FM confirmations in one audit folder labelled "§8.3.2".
Global renumbering & terminology tweaks (e.g., "Rated hours" process now Table 5.2).	Old section numbers (v4.2 / v5.1) are obsolete.	Update any internal procedures, training decks or audit checklists to the new numbering.

Automation Solutions

Gone are the days of the rigid 9-to-5 work schedule. The rise of flexibility in work arrangements, along with technology advances, has empowered employees to redefine where and when work happens. Tenants want the choice to work before and after 9 AM to 5 PM. As a result, scheduling HVAC services outside normal operating hours is growing in popularity.

While after-hours utilities benefit workers, they usually mean an increase in overall energy consumption—and this at a time when owners are looking to lower

their portfolio's carbon footprint to comply with carbon emission mandates. Put simply: workers are demanding more energy usage. Governments are demanding less. And property owners are stuck in the middle.

One workable solution is after-hours HVAC automation. Automating your program delivers worker flexibility and energy conservation. By putting the power of scheduling in the hands of tenants and workers, HVAC becomes an “on-demand” utility that tenants can schedule and manage themselves as needed.



Case Study Insight: 152 Fanshawe Street used seamless BMS integration and automated scheduling to eliminate manual errors and reduce energy waste. [See full results](#)

Common Benefits

AHAC programs are perfect candidates for automation, and most benefit from Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and cloud-based platforms that automate common tasks like scheduling and billing.



✓ Time Savings

Automation means less time your staff need to spend managing after-hours bookings and invoicing tenants each month. Tenant statements are automatically logged and reported every month. You'll save time by omitting manual spreadsheet entries and invoice creation.

✓ Less Energy Waste

Automation and mobile booking guard against wasted energy from bookings going uncanceled by tenants and staff. Plus, accurate recording of your plant's after-hours HVAC run times ensures you get credit for every kWh saved for your building rating system.

✓ Accurate Billing

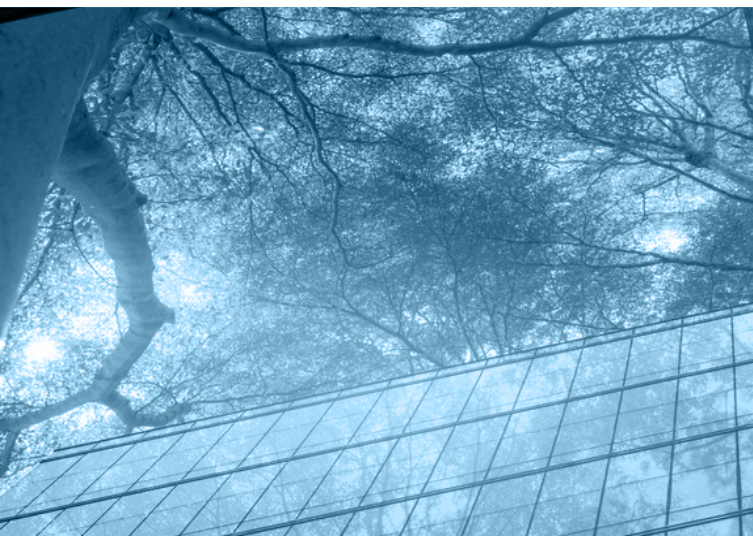
Automated scheduling and billing result in fewer errors in recording and changing after-hours bookings. Fewer errors mean fewer revenue losses from miscalculated energy charges. Accuracy also results in fewer billing disputes and arguments with tenants over after-hours charges.

✓ Flexible Work

The convergence of flexible work demands and energy conservation requirements is squeezing owners and managers to find solutions. After-hours HVAC automation offers a path forward that satisfies both tenant needs and sustainability goals.

✓ Happier Tenants

After-hours automation supports flexible work schedules. Satisfaction rates increase when tenants are given more control and flexibility around when and where they work.





Real-World Results

Case Study — 152 Fanshawe Street, Auckland

38%

Less After-Hours
Energy

5.5

NABERS Rating

Property Snapshot

- 16-storey premium office building
- 24,000 m² Net Lettable Area
- Central Auckland location
- Previously faced inaccurate billing & uncontrolled HVAC

The Challenge

Before implementing automation, 152 Fanshawe Street struggled with uncontrolled after-hours run-time, manual activation that left plant running overnight, and frequent billing disputes with tenants. The property's NABERS rating was stuck at 4.0 stars despite other efficiency improvements.

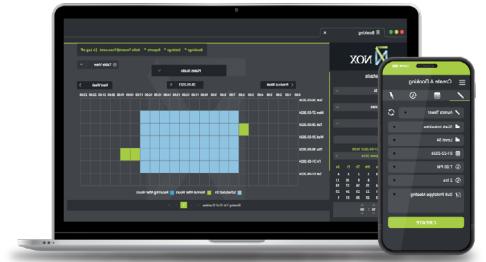
5.5 
NABERS
ENERGY



The 7NOX Solution

The building implemented [7NOX](#)—a comprehensive automation solution featuring:

- ✓ Seamless BMS integration
- ✓ Automated scheduling with tenant self-service
- ✓ Precise tenant billing with transparent reporting
- ✓ Real-time monitoring and optimization
- ✓ Monthly billing automation



Financial Impact

Before implementing automation, 152 Fanshawe Street struggled with uncontrolled after-hours run-time, manual activation that left plant running overnight, and frequent billing disputes with tenants. The property's NABERS rating was stuck at 4.0 stars despite other efficiency improvements.

“The implementation of the 7NOX app was an essential tool in reaching our NABERS ratings goals, providing our tenants with a transparent and easy solution, controlling energy usage and gaining efficiencies.”

Simi Mukherjee
Head of Facilities &
Sustainability, PMG Funds



Lessons Learned

The success at 152 Fanshawe Street demonstrates that automation isn't just about technology—it's about creating a better experience for everyone involved. Tenants get flexibility and transparency, while property managers gain control and energy savings.

Ready to see similar results in your building?

Discover how automation can transform your after-hours HVAC program with a personalized assessment of your property's potential.



For more information about 7NOX and to schedule a free demo:

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This guide provides general information and should not be considered legal advice. Always consult with qualified professionals for specific legal, technical, and financial guidance related to your property's AHAC implementation. Updated for NABERS Energy and Water for Offices Rules v5.2 (April 2025). Results are property-specific; actual savings may vary based on building characteristics, tenant behavior, and system configuration.