

FIRE SAFETY IN MAKESHIFT SITES

Fire Safety Recommendations

Many IDPs in Gaza are living in Makeshift sites which the Site Management Working group defines as “self-settled by displaced populations, typically without a (formal) site management entity, and with a population of over 10 households”. These sites, consisting of humanitarian tents and makeshift self built shelters, pose unique fire risks due to the combination of highly flammable materials, improvised cooking and heating methods, overcrowding and limited infrastructure. Fire incidents in such settings can spread rapidly, potentially leading to devastating consequences. Therefore, implementing robust fire prevention measures is crucial for the safety and well-being of residents. Being aware of the limited control that humanitarian organisations have over the establishment and growth of spontaneous settlements, it is nevertheless important to remember to convey basic measures that help significantly to reduce the risks of fires and to limit their impact when they do occur.

It is understood that all of these basic measures will not be achievable. Partners should strive to consider as many as possible, as far as is possible, realising that any of these measures will help reduce the risk of fire.

Site Planning layout

- Where possible ensure and encourage adequate spacing between tents/shelters (at least 2 meters, ideally 3-4 meters).
- Where possible create firebreaks: clear areas or paths at least 30 meters wide every 300 meters.
- Arrange tents in a grid pattern to facilitate easy evacuation.

Flammable Materials Management

- Distribute only tents or shelter materials that are non-combustible or combustible with very limited contribution to fire (European Standard EN 13501-1 A or B classes).
- Encourage residents to keep areas around tents/shelters clear of dry vegetation, solid waste and debris.
- Promote proper disposal/storage of waste in designated areas to prevent buildup of flammable trash next to the shelters.
- Encourage storage of fuel for cooking/heating in designated areas away from living spaces.

Cooking and Heating Safety

- Where possible, support residents to cook in designated communal cooking areas or outside the shelter and keep away from shelter walls. Ensure cooking stoves are equipped with flame protection mechanisms to prevent accidental fires.
- Encourage residents to avoid cooking inside tents and makeshift shelters or near flammable materials.
- Endeavour to provide safe heating options with clear usage guidelines (EIC materials).

Lighting and Electrical Safety

- Households should avoid using candles or open flames for lighting (partners should consider providing solar lamps as alternatives if possible, and/or EIC materials for the correct protection of candles flames).
- Pay attention to electrical setups (connections exposed to water, cables damaged or exposed to breakage, unprotected connections, excessive electrical load, etc.).

Firefighting and Emergency Response

- Distribute sand buckets.
- Establish community alarm systems (bells, whistles). Identify fire wardens.
- Encourage communities to establish escape routes and to share routes with residents

Education and Awareness

- Community engagement is very important in fire safety to assess and identify the risks and to disseminate the best practices.
- Distribute EIC materials adapted to the context and the items to be distributed.