

KEY MESSAGES 2023-24

Simple Suggestions to Stay Warm and Safe this Winter Shelter TWG

Winter is here! It is time to prepare to stay warm and safe this winter. There are several simple things you can do to stay warm and safe even if you're not in your usual home.

Conserve Energy

- ✓ Seal any gaps around doors to reduce the loss of heat.
- ✓ Make sure windows are closed to keep heat inside.
- ✓ Search out and plug any gaps in walls or floors which can let heat escape from your shelter.
- ✓ Place a blanket or piece of thick plastic over the inside of doorways to retain heat when an outside door is opened.
- ✓ If there is the opportunity to put insulation, it is preferred to put it on the outside (avoid putting it inside) the container for improving heat retention.

Heat Appropriately

- ✓ Safety should be the first consideration when heating inside.
- ✓ Electric heaters should be enclosed (such as oil-based heaters) with no exposed coils. Exposed coils can come in contact with fabric/flammable material and start a fire.
- ✓ If you are using a stove, make sure you do not burn items that could release poisonous gases, such as textile products, and plastic materials.
- ✓ Heaters and stoves should be far enough (50cm minimum) away from walls or other materials to avoid fires. If possible, keep stoves in separate space designated for cooking.
- ✓ Take safety measures to prevent young children from coming into physical contact with heat sources. Fuel and other combustible items should be stored away from heaters or stoves.
- ✓ Do not use charcoal braziers for heating in sleeping areas.
- ✓ Avoid open flames inside, candles and other small flames can be put in lamps or jars. Never leave a flame unattended, like while sleeping or when leaving the shelter.
- ✓ If possible, try to have an easily accessible fire extinguisher in or near your shelter and make sure you know how to use it in case of an emergency.
- ✓ Know how to safely control a fire in your shelter and share this knowledge with everyone living in the shelter. Have an escape route planned and keep it clear.
- ✓ If there is a fire, get everyone outside the shelter, then close the doors and windows (from the outside) to contain the blaze.
- ✓ If coal, wood, or gas stoves/heaters are used, make sure that they are adequately vented and do not leak smoke into the shelter, be mindful of the dangers of carbon monoxide.
- ✓ Make sure that chimneys are stable and will vent smoke and heat away from the shelter.

Protect the shelter from water influx/flooding

- ✓ Dig drains around the shelter to protect the shelter from water influx. Connect the drains to secondary/primary drains if available.
- ✓ The weight of snow accumulated on the roof may cause the roofs to collapse in temporary settlements such as containers. Clear off the accumulated snow regularly
- ✓ For tents or makeshift shelters, raise the floor off the ground using pallets and boards to prevent flooding and heat loss.
- ✓ For containers, seal joints/cracks with roofing tape or silicone sealant to prevent leaking and heat loss.