

Better Shelter .org

A home away from home

The Better Shelter is a modular emergency and transitional shelter designed to meet user needs for privacy, security and familiarity. The prefabricated solution is delivered in ready-to-assemble flat packs, and can be adapted for different areas of use, making it a versatile and scalable shelter option for humanitarian organisations in various contexts worldwide.

Better Shelter 1.2

The Better Shelter is a 17.5 m² modular emergency and transitional shelter for up to five persons, developed according to Sphere standards for humanitarian use. The structure's steel frame is securely anchored to the ground and clad with tough yet lightweight roof and wall panels. It includes four windows, four ventilation openings and a lockable door. A solar panel on the roof generates power to illuminate a built-in lamp, as well as power for the charging of electronic devices. The shelter is delivered in two flat packs including all components and necessary tools, and can be assembled by four people in five to six hours without the need for electricity.

The shelter can be adapted to suit specific contexts and applications. Modular design means sections can be added and removed to create different structures. Within a phased response context, the unit can be upgraded using local materials. It is easily maintained, and components can easily be replaced in the event of damage. It can be dismantled, moved and remounted.

Better Shelter is a solution to large scale displacement in situations where only temporary structures are permitted and locally sourced solutions are not available. It offers the following benefits:

Scalable



- All necessary components and tools included
- Enables predictable planning, budgeting and implementation
- Installed in 5–6 hours by a team of four



Cost effective



- Flat-packed
- Minimum site preparations required
- Requires no skilled labour
- Modular system can be maintained and repaired over time



Versatile



- Minimum 3 year lifespan
- Adaptable size and layout
- Fit for numerous applications: shelter and communal infrastructure
- Can be disassembled, moved and reassembled



Safe and dignified



- Protects against heavy rain, wind and sun
- Vector control
- Lockable door, rigid steel frame, opaque walls and a portable solar powered lamp
- Free standing height and 9 airflow openings



Structure	Frame of steel pipes connected through steel joints and secured with cross wires. The foundation is mounted to the ground with anchors. Clad with semi-rigid polyolefin panels. Features a lockable door, four windows, four ventilation inlets and a lamp.
Materials	Frame: Galvanized high strength steel Envelope [wall & roof panels]: Semi-hard & opaque plastic panel.
Measurements [LxWxH] [m]	Entire structure: 5.68x3.32x2.83 Covered living space: 17.5 m ² Per person [total 5]: 3.5 m ² Min. indoor height [eave level]: 1.8 m Max. indoor height: 2.7 m.
PV system	2.5Wp. LED lamp & port to charge multiple electric devices. Provides up to six hours of light when fully charged.
Fire resistance	Allows for minimum 2-minute escape time. Fire risks must be assessed to inform the site planning of temporary settlements and the grouping of individual shelters. A safety distance of minimum 5m between units is recommended.
Temperature range	5–40°C
Wind resistance	Up to 28m/s or 101km/h. Actual performance depends on building configurations, the quality of the build, the anchoring or other mounting method used, as well as location and terrain.
Lifespan	36 months with basic maintenance.
Shelf-life	Min. 3 years under dry, clean and ventilated conditions.
Volume per unit	1.14 m ³ (2.02x1.09x0.52 m). 48 units in container 40 feet HC. 36 units in container 40 feet DC.
Weight per unit	160kg excl pallet.
Assembly	Can be erected by a team of four people in 5-6 hours without additional tools or electricity on different types of soil and on concrete flooring. Graphic step-by-step instruction manuals are included. Capacity building and assembly training is available on demand. Easy to maintain. A spare part kit is included. May be upgraded with local material.
Cost	€1150 per unit.



Capacity building and technical support

We offer training and support in assembly, risk mitigation and maintenance of shelters according to partner specific technical and logistical considerations. We provide planning and layout support to meet site-specific requirements and optimise partner capacity and resources in order to ensure as many people as possible are offered the shelter they need as quickly as possible.

Better Shelter is a social enterprise based in Sweden. We develop and provide post-emergency shelters for humanitarian emergency response and contingency planning in collaboration with UNHCR and the IKEA Foundation.



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