



Minimum Recommended Standards for Bunkhouses

December 2013

The construction of temporary shelters, largely in the form of 'bunkhouses' is already underway in several areas, including in and around Tacloban city. This is a Government led response as a means of providing **temporary shelter** to decongest evacuation centres. It is also anticipated that informal settlers in the hardest-hit areas, many of which may be declared no build zones by local governments, will also be relocated to these temporary shelters.

A number of the international humanitarian communities' clusters would like to work with the Government to ensure that certain minimum standards are followed and met especially around protection, design, site planning and the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene services. In doing so the displaced communities will be able to stay there temporarily with a certain degree of privacy, security and dignity.

In this context, the **UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, relevant instruments of international law**, the **Philippines' Commission of Human Rights advisory**, that is based on national law, and the said Guidance Principles, must be considered before the construction of bunkhouses and also during the identification of the residents. Some of the issues of concern include consultation with communities, voluntary relocation, and seeking suitable alternatives.



Overarching protection principles:

Ensure **consultation with the target population** at all stages, and the meaningful participation and access to information for all in the design, targeting and determination of the temporary shelter interventions, in particular vulnerable and marginalized groups.

- Avoid exposing people to further harm;
- Ensure people's access to impartial assistance;
- Protect people from physical and psychological harm due to violence or coercion;
- Assist with rights claims, access to remedies and recovery from abuse;
- Identifying the most vulnerable and their specific needs with attention to age, gender, disability and other;
- Identify inequalities and guarantee non-discrimination;
- Identifying and strengthening existing positive community protection strategies/building local capacity;

All activities should ultimately find a **durable solution** for displaced families to enable them to restart their lives in the shortest possible time. Bunkhouses should be an **intermediate** step to this.

Evacuation and relocation should be **voluntary**. Forced evacuation or relocation should only occur when it is required by law and **absolutely necessary to protect life, physical integrity and health**.

Displaced persons have a **right to return, voluntarily and in safety and dignity**, to their original place of residence, except when return creates a risk to life, health or physical integrity.

If relocation is not desired by the affected individuals or groups, resettlement and local integration conditions must comply with international human rights standards and guidelines pertaining to adequate housing, evictions and displacement.

The **safety of displaced people** accommodated in emergency or evacuation shelters should be ensured along with **access to water and sanitation, as well as health and police services**. Temporary shelters designed to house displaced people over longer periods while they wait to return to their homes or move to alternative permanent accommodation must generally offer more **privacy and allow families to cohabit**.

I. Selection of the site for temporary shelter:

Occupants' **safety and security**, including from the threat of a further natural disaster, is a principal consideration when **selecting sites for temporary shelters**. Provided it is safe, the location of shelters at or near the place they lived before minimizes the risk of land grabbing, eviction and community fragmentation, maintains livelihoods, and permits people to protect their own land and property and community cohesion. Site selection should also take into account **claims to land by local or adjacent groups** (including customary rights holders), access to **education, health and social services infrastructures**, opportunities to work and maintain **livelihoods**, the right to adequate **housing**, and the **possibility that the relocation site might become permanent**.

The site selection should aim to **preserve networks that provide protection to vulnerable groups** and group communities to maintain social protection mechanisms and networks and limit displacement-associated psychosocial distress.

- Information campaign and consultation with beneficiaries should be carried out as soon as possible with regards to criteria for selection of beneficiaries, estimated period of displacement (where possible), location and type of bunkhouse, services available and a contact of site management focal point should be provided.
- 'Go and see' visits should be organized.
- Registration of beneficiaries including place of origin and reason for displacement in order to allow tailoring of longer term solutions.
- Ensure establishment of a site management committee and clarify roles and responsibilities, including referral mechanisms.

II. Shelter:

Temporary shelters should be able to accommodate families of different sizes and include measures for **protecting vulnerable groups**, especially pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. **Access to shelters** should be prioritized for families with vulnerable members (babies and young children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, older people, individuals who are seriously ill or injured, unaccompanied minors, female-headed households). Construction should comply with adequate **building standards and international humanitarian Sphere Standards**.



- Each unit should provide **a minimum of 18sq. metres** covered living space for family of up to 5 people.
- Foundations must secure shelter to the ground in strong wind, and be sufficiently raised to withstand seasonal flooding of the site.
- Promote openings on 2 sides where possible to allow for adequate ventilation.
- Walls should be sufficiently thick, span from floor to ceiling to ensure privacy and shall be well fixed.
- The design should allow for addition of at least one internal division for privacy.
- Include provision of roof insulation or ceiling so as to protect from heat generation from CGI sheeting.
- Adequate lighting should be provided.
- Robust locks on doors and windows should be provided.
- The finishing should be safe and child-friendly.

III Site planning:

It is highly recommended that DOH Sanitary Inspectors and water service providers (such as water districts/water cooperatives) are involved in site planning to ensure that proper water and sanitation inputs are included in the site planning process.

Medical and sanitation facilities, and communal spaces for women and play and recreation spaces for children and community meetings, should be placed in **well-lit and secure areas**.

Site Development:

- Disability access in at least one row of the bunk house site must be ensured.
- Adequate spacing between units to mitigate fire hazards is recommended to be a distance of twice the height of the building.
- Communal washing areas and designated areas for domestic garbage disposal sites should be included and at a reasonable distance from the bunkhouse itself.
- Adequate lighting in the general areas.
- Location should not be in flood prone areas.
- Availability of designated common areas, such as child friendly spaces and cooking areas.
- WASH committees should be established in all sites to ensure operation and maintenance of facilities and site cleanliness.



Other considerations in the construction of communal WASH Facilities:

Water Supply:

- Wherever possible the sites should be connected to mains supply to ensure regular water supply and reduce on-going costs associated with water trucking. Payment of water bills needs clarification upfront.
- Designated drinking water stations should be set up in all sites. Each person should have at least 15 liters of water per day for all water needs and 5 liters/person/day for drinking.

Sanitation, Drainage Sanitation, Drainage and Excreta management:

- Site development to include drainage system (not built in depression and do not have pooling water that will attract vectors such as mosquitoes) and designated common areas, such as child friendly spaces and cooking areas.
- Communal lighting for pathways and toilets.
- Concrete paving around tapstands, washing areas, latrines, showers and room entrances.
- Latrines and bathing areas should be sex -segregated, well lit, private and can be locked from the inside. The WASH Cluster standards specify 1 toilet per 20 persons for bunkhouses. Current designs are for 1:30.
- Heavy vehicle access for solid waste collection and for desludging to septic tank needs to be ensured.
- Handwashing stations must be adjacent to toilet facilities and as a minimum, should meet the 1:20 toilet ratio.
- Consideration should be made for clothes washing areas that connect to proper drains.

IV Exit planning

In the past, bunkhouses have been used for emergency/temporary shelter. Unfortunately, in many cases after the emergency, people were left to live in bunkhouses indefinitely or for a longer period than anticipated because relocation/reconstruction plans were delayed, were not implemented, or did not include the residents effectively.

In the present context **multiple displacement** is taking place. First during the initial evacuation; second when they return to their communities or move to other evacuation centers; third when they move to temporary shelters (bunkhouses), and fourth when they move to more permanent dwellings. **This is not advisable** as it breaks apart communities, makes them more fragile, poses an impediment for them to stabilize and seek a self recovery solution themselves, often creates a distance from their original place of employment, and opens up the possibility of exploitation of women and children in particular.