Cat Shelter

These instructions are for building an insulated cat shelter **2 ft. x 3 ft. x18 in. high**. You should be able to buy the materials for approximately $25-30 at a local lumber yard. An electric saw and screwdriver are highly recommended. Caution: If you are not experienced with an electric saw, have a skilled person cut the wood and paneling. It is always easier when there are two people doing the job. If these instructions seem too difficult, you may consider buying an already constructed dog house or consult your local newspaper or community bulletin boards for a handyman looking for a project.

Following is a list of things to consider before starting your project. These will help you determine what you need to buy and how much work will be involved, and also provide a few helpful hints.

- How many cats do you need to house? This number determines how many shelters to build. Keep in mind that not all cats are likely to use the shelter, or at least not all at the same time. This shelter should probably house no more than 5 to 7 cats at once. You can adjust this plan to make a larger shelter, or build more than one shelter as necessary.
- Be sure to make the shelter small enough for transport in your vehicle. The shelter size described here will fit in a standard size car trunk with the trunk lid open.
- If you live in a climate that gets very cold we recommend that you use insulation as described in the plans.
- Use only exterior paint to reduce weather exposure (preferably dark green or dark brown, or something that matches the surroundings).
- The floor should be tiled instead of carpeted to reduce the chance of flea infestation and combat moisture inside the shelter.
- Use screws instead of nails for better durability.
- The roof should be hinged so bedding can be replaced, and for easy access when rescuing kittens that might be sheltered there.
- The roof should be slanted to keep water outside.
- A wind block should be set in place inside the door of the shelter to improve occupant comfort. You may also consider a canvas flap to go over the door.
- Place wood chips, straw, or hay inside for warmth and comfort.

Materials Needed

- 1 4-ft. x8-ft. sheet Â½-in. exterior grade plywood or waferboard
- 1 4-ft. x8-ft. sheet interior paneling or thin plywood
- 1 pkg. roofing shingles or enough to cover 8 sq. ft. roof
- 2 2-in. x 3-in. x 6-ft. untreated lumber
- Linoleum, or other floor tiles (to cover 6 sq. ft. floor)
- 1 quart exterior house paint

- 2 medium hinges ("T" or gate hinges)
- 2 in. flat headed wood screws or grippers (approximately 50)
- 4 to 9 bricks for foundation
- small roofing nails (approximately 15)
- fiberglass insulation (1 roll, or enough to cover 14-20 sq. ft.)

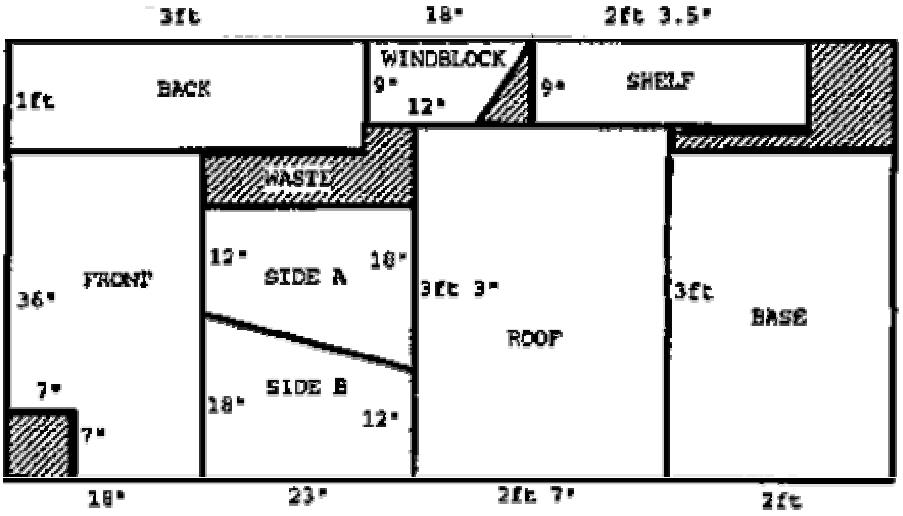
Tools Needed

(available at local hardware store or tool rental)

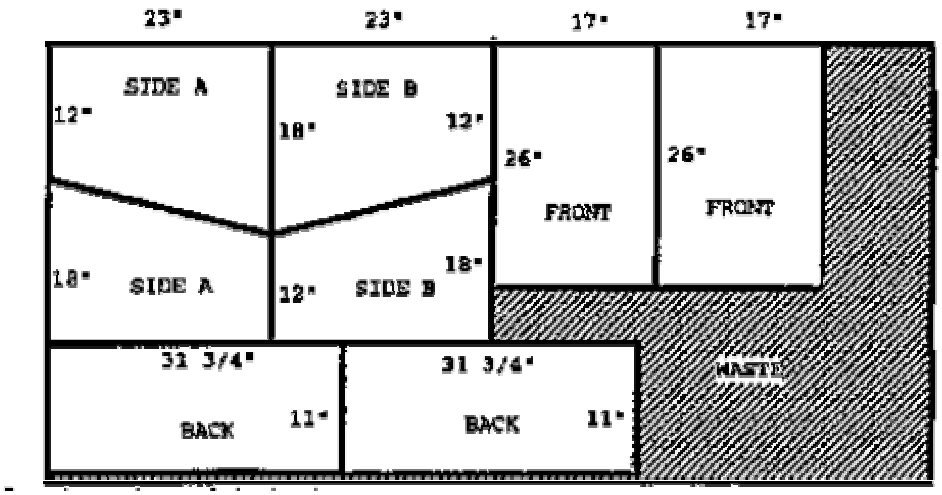
- hammer
- electric screw driver
- angle brace or T-square
- staple gun
- measuring tape
- marking pen

Assembly

1. Cut wood. For easy assembly cut all wood first, then assemble shelter. Some pieces may need adjustment after cutting.
    a. Cut plywood as shown below. This is only enough for one shelter.

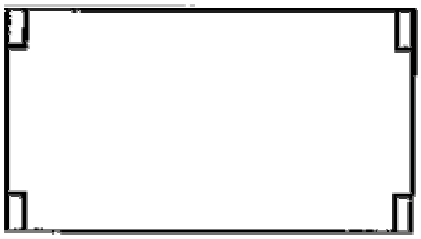


    b. Cut paneling as shown below. One sheet of paneling is enough for two shelters.

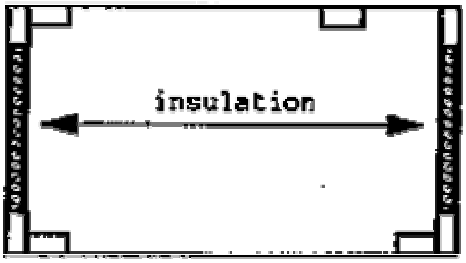


c. Cut 2-in. x 3-in. x 6-ft. lumber into 8 posts and 2 shelf braces. Cut four 11-in. lengths, and one 17-in length from one piece. Cut one 17-in., two 16-in., and two 5-in. lengths from the other.

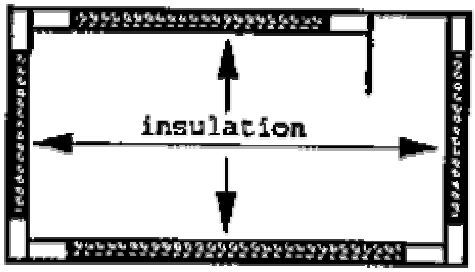
2. Place base on table or work bench. These plans referenced to front oriented at top in diagram. Put side wall A in place on left and screw front wall and left side wall together using one 17-in. corner post.
3. Position side wall B on right and attach to front wall using other 17-in. corner post.
4. Position back wall and attach to both side walls using two 11-in. corner posts. *Note*: corner posts should rest on top of base, as should front, back, and side walls. All posts should be inside front, back, and side walls.



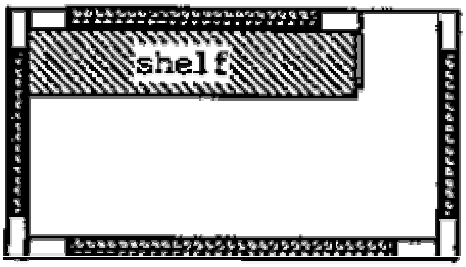
5. Turn walls upside down and place base on top. Mount base to sides, first screwing down corners then going along edges. Be careful that screws go straight into plywood walls, without protruding through sides.
6. Turn shelter back to upright position.
7. Cut and staple insulation to inside of side walls A and B.
8. Screw interior side walls A and B (cut from paneling) to corner posts already in place.
9. Attach front and back posts for front and back wall supports. *Note*: these posts are placed flat against front and back walls, at right angles to corner posts, as shown. Post next to front door should be 5Â½ inches from right interior wall to leave room for wind block.



10. Cut and staple insulation to inside of front and back walls.
11. Screw front and back interior walls to front and back posts.
12. Put wind block in place and screw it to front of shelter, then to bottom (do this from outside in).



13. Screw 5-in. shelf braces upright to center of wind block and left interior wall near front corner of shelter to support shelf if desired. Then screw 9-in. x 2-ft. 3 Â½ in. shelf on top of braces (for extra cat sleeping room).



14. You may want to place leftover pieces of plywood or paneling over exposed insulation around top edges of shelter. Strips must be measured and cut to fit spaces to be filled.
15. Place roof on bench and turn shelter upside down. Center shelter on roof with roof hanging over on all sides. Screw hinges to underside of roof and outside front of shelter so it will open easily and stand up straight on its own.
16. Turn shelter back over and attach shingles with roofing nails in offset pattern to seal against weather. After nailing shingles, bend nail points over to avoid injuring cats.
17. Place floor tiles inside if desired for extra protection.
18. Paint shelter (all exposed wood should be painted, including bottom, to protect it from rain and/or snow).

19. When installing shelter, make sure to set it on top of bricks or other objects to keep it away from ground contact. Also take prevailing winds and exposure into account: placing shelter front facing south often maximizes warmth.
    Note: you may also cover interior underside of roof with fiberglass or plastic foam insulation, but be sure to cover it with plastic or wood. Foam needs cover to hold it in place, and uncovered fiberglass will harm cats.