

How to Build A Winter Cat Shelter



The Structure

- Try to use earth-toned storage bins as vibrant colours will deter cats. Also earth-tones can easily hide in the environment
- Use straw at the bottom of the bin and top layer of the bin as extra insulation and to stop heat from escaping
- Don't place the shelters on the cold ground as the cold will seep in, instead place them on 2X4s, straw or another material to keep them warm
- Create extra protection from the weather and potential predators by securely taping heavy garbage bags to the top of the shelter (can even make it into a triangle shape to deter perching)
- Periodically check the cat shelters to make sure the straw/insulation is not soaked or frozen
- If your area gets a lot of snow, rain, (wet conditions) then drill one hole into one side of the flooring to let the water drain out

The Door

- Cut a small door to prevent raccoons, foxes, or coyotes from getting in
- Cut the door on the lengthwise side of the bin, unless making two doors
- **Option:** make 2 doors (one for entrance and one for escape), do not have the entrance and escape door facing each other as this will create a draft
- Use tape on door edges for safety

Placement

- Don't place in locations where dogs are a threat/have easy access
- Keep shelters out of sight, such as in nooks, corners, or facing a wall to keep cats safe
- If feeding community cats, keep the food and water dishes outside the shelter so they don't spill, get turned over, or cause mold

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Detailed Instructions

1. Gather all the materials
2. Place straw on the bottom of the 1 Large Rubbermaid storage bin
3. Double check if the insulation and 1 Small Rubbermaid storage bin can fit into your 1L Rubbermaid storage bin.
4. Make sure there is at least 10cm between the insulation and the top of the large box so you can place more straw on top for extra heat insulation and protection
5. If needed, deconstruct the insulation material so it can easily fit and wrap it around the 1 Small Rubbermaid storage bin. The insulation should be as snug as possible.
6. Use duct tape to secure the insulation to the sides of the shelter
7. If needed due to a wet climate, drill one hole into one side of the bottom of the shelter
8. Cut the door around 15cm (L) X 15cm (H) and at least 30cm above the ground to reduce snow/rain/slush from getting in or trapping cats in
9. Secure duct tape around the door to make it safe for cats to enter (no sharp edges)
10. Place lots of straw on the inside of the 1 Small Rubbermaid storage bin (remember- no blankets, towels or hay!) for bedding
11. Close the lid to the 1 Small Rubbermaid storage bin
12. Place insulation material on the top of the 1 Small Rubbermaid storage bin and place straw over top of that
13. Place the 1 Large Rubbermaid storage bin on
14. Use duct tape to secure heavy garbage bag on top of the cat shelter.
15. Use a 2X4 , bricks, or rocks to keep the cat shelter from blowing away in windy areas
16. If the ground freezes in your area then perch the cat shelter on a few 2X4s or even bricks so the cold doesn't seep into the shelter

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Materials

For colder temperatures use two Rubbermaid storage bins (1L and 1M) and a styrofoam/padding material for insulation

- **Container**- One Large Rubbermaid storage bins(70L-136L) or plywood made in similar shape (to make an extra warm and a small/medium Rubbermaid storage bin
- **Insulation**- Styrofoam cooler/box or reflective insulation or use firm padding material
- **Secure**- Duct tape
- **Cutters**- Box cutters or sturdy scissors
- **Stability**- use rocks, bricks, or a 2X4 for the top of cat shelter in windy areas and a 2X4 for the cat shelter to be placed/perched on in really cold areas
- **Bedding**- use **straw** as it absorbs moisture and is less prone to mold or rot
 - Do not use blankets, towels ,or newspapers as they trap in the cold and wetness
 - Do not use hay as it quickly molds and rots in wet weather

Breaking It All Down

1. 1 Large storage bin
2. Inside the large storage bin= 1 small storage bin with insulation material securely wrapped around it.
3. Underneath the small storage bin place straw for extra insulation from the ground
4. Cut a 15cm X 15cm doorway on the lengthwise side of the Large storage bin and same on the inside of the small storage bin and through the insulation material **The double door has to be like a safe tunnel for a cat to the warm bedding**
5. Place loads of straw into the small storage bin for extra insulation
6. Place the lid on the small storage bin, cover
7. Place straw on the top of the lid of the small storage bin for extra insulation
8. Place the lid of the large storage bin on
9. Secure a heavy garbage bag on top of the large storage bin for protection from the rain with a heavy weight on top
10. Put the cat shelter in a nook near a cat colony
11. Done!