

CCCM and Shelter/NFI Clusters'

Fire Prevention and Response Guidance



Image Credit: Civil Defense

Introduction

Context

Fire incidents continue to be a prevalent concern in IDP sites in north-west Syria (NWS) where already vulnerable displaced populations face regular risks to themselves, their shelters and belongings as a result of these incidents.

Notably, the majority of IDP sites in NWS are self-settled (over 90% according to the sites listed in the CCCM database) and often lack proper infrastructure, site planning and camp management systems; which increases potential fire hazards and creates particular challenges in responding to incidents, such as access in an emergency situation. According to CCCM's multi-sectoral service monitoring factsheet (published in May 2020) fire points were needed in 96% of the reported IDP sites (further details in Annex 2).

CCCM and Shelter/NFI (SNFI) Cluster members have reported the particular hazards and challenges in IDP sites that need addressing; including the misuse of fuel, cooking and heating devices, as well as lack of awareness and appropriate equipment to respond to fires. As the economic situation in north-west Syria has continued to deteriorate with the devaluation of the Syrian pound, people have increasingly had to resort to different fuel types which can be more hazardous, or not be appropriate for their specific heating or cooking device. This has been reported as a negative coping mechanism by IDPs to meet their needs taking into account the limitation of resources. Consequently, there are risks related to fires in both self-settled and planned IDP sites, and clear needs and gaps that need to be responded to.

Current Response

The CCCM Cluster continues to monitor and report on the incidents affecting IDP sites as part of its coordination role. Since the beginning of 2020 until 10 September, the CCCM Cluster reported a total of 84 incidents in IDP sites, of which the majority (60) were fire incidents that affected 201 households during this period. CCCM has also established a Fire Response Taskforce to act as a focal point to better coordinate the fire response.



CCCM Reported Fire Incidents: 1 Jan. - 10 Sept. 2020

A multi-sectoral approach is required to effectively prevent and respond to fire incidents. For instance, as a direct result of these reported incidents, the immediate and urgent needs ranged from tents and NFI kits, to food parcels and fire extinguishers.

Local stakeholders operating on the ground in NWS (such as the Civil Defense, NGOs, and Camp Management personnel) play an essential role in responding to fire incidents. Strong coordination between the Clusters, local stakeholders, as well as engagement at the community level with beneficiaries, are all key aspects of the current response that should continue to be built upon.

This guidance aims to adopt an integrated approach and provide an overview of the recommendations from both the CCCM and SNFI Clusters to prevent and respond to fire incidents in IDP sites in NWS.

Fire Hazards and Challenges

Common Fire Hazards

Some of the main causes of fire incidents in IDP sites in NWS include;

- Misuse of the fuel, cooking and heating stoves/devices.
- Use of basic or inappropriate stoves/devices.
- Poor connection of cooking or heating stoves/devices.
- Poor connection of solar panels, and batteries exposed to the sun.
- Cooking inside shelters.
- Inappropriate electrical networking.
- Flammable shelter materials.
- Poor quality and inappropriate fuel types.
- Fuel storage inside shelters.
- Gas leakages.
- Burning garbage.
- Indoor smoking.
- Dried-out grass surrounding the sites.

Challenges in IDP Sites in NWS

IDP sites in NWS are a particularly high-risk context for fire incidents, as they are often overcrowded and multiple tents are situated close by, in addition to a variety of other challenges;

- **Self-settled Sites:**
 - The majority of IDP sites in NWS are self-settled, and have not been designed according to international standards.
 - As a result, sites often lack fire breaks between shelters, and do not have fire points or dedicated spaces for cooking.
 - In addition, self-settled sites often lack camp management systems, and services such as garbage collection and disposal systems.
 - Most sites have connected tents and shelters, and if one tent catches fire, it can easily spread.
- **Access to Sites:**
 - Rapidly reaching sites is a further challenge when a fire does break out, specifically narrow roads that prevent fire-fighting vehicles from entering quickly.

- **Lack of Appropriate Fuel, Heating and Cooking Devices:**
 - Many IDPs are having to resort to using inappropriate devices and fuel types out of necessity, such as burning mixed fuel, cloth, cartoons and plastic.
 - Increasing fuel prices creates additional burdens on IDPs to be able to afford fuel for cooking and heating.
 - In some other cases, cooking or heating stoves being poorly connected has increased fire hazards.
- **Lack of Fire Response Materials:**
 - Many sites do not have the needed resources to respond to an incident, such as water hoses, fire extinguishers, protective clothing etc.
 - Even when fire extinguishers are available, many IDPS are not aware how to use them. It is common for men to work outside the sites during the day, and if an incident does occur, women have to take the lead to respond and often have not received the required training or guidance.
- **Lack of Awareness:**
 - Further information needs to be provided about how to minimize the risks to prevent fires and how to respond to fires quickly and effectively if they do occur; and as mentioned above, guidance on how to use the firefighting equipment.
 - In addition to other factors, such as being aware of the impact of weather conditions (e.g. speed/direction of the wind and the dry season).
- **Limited Space, Facilities and Storage:**
 - The family tent is usually used for living, cooking, washing as well as sleeping due to the limited space available.
 - Cooking fuel can penetrate easily and increase the danger of setting fire due to the daily continuous internal movements by family members. Even a spark could be enough to start a fire in this case (as gas and kerosene are rapidly flammable fuel types).
 - Inappropriate storage of heating fuel and stoves inside shelters is another negative coping mechanism and fire hazard.
- **Limited Services:**
 - Disposing of garbage by burning it in the sites is another challenge related to limited services, creating a fire hazard close to tents and makeshift shelters.
- **Low Quality Shelter (Tent) Materials:**
 - Some tents are made of flammable material covers and sheets.
 - In many cases where there has been an incident, makeshift shelters were locally manufactured, often in the shape of a ship where the edges become close to fire sources or the stove when cooking inside.

- **Inappropriate Electrical Networking:**

- Some fire incidents have been caused because solar panels were poorly connected, with wires laid incorrectly or even laid fixed to the tent's metal skeleton.
- Due to economic hardship, some tents' networks do not have power regulators which are essential equipment for safer electric networking.
- In many cases, batteries being left under sun led to them exploding and setting fire.



Image Credit: Ataa

Fire Prevention and Response Recommendations

Fire Prevention Measures

✓ **Raise Community Awareness**

- Empower people to prevent and respond to incidents through training and awareness campaigns, including brochures and IEC materials (taking into account COVID-19 safety measures). An example of IEC materials can be found in Annex 3.
- Ensure that women are included in capacity development and awareness activities.
- Organize fire drills.
- Improve knowledge at the community level using Safety Unit Volunteers (SUV).
- Train/guide people on how to use fire extinguishers, how to safely connect the cooking stoves to pipes, fuel and stove safe usage, as well as fire safety and electricity.

✓ **Capacity Building Trainings**

- Provide basic training for camp management personnel, fire camp committees and NGO staff.
- Coordinate with the Civil Defense on the provision of trainings in IDP sites.

✓ **Establish Fire Response Camp Committees**

- Establish fire response committees in camps with a view to empower people to be able to prevent and respond to possible fire incidents where they live.

✓ **Establish Fire Warden Systems and Develop Contingency Plans**

- Develop a fire warden system in IDP sites, including alternative wardens to act as a back-up.
- Develop contingency plans, including fire safety and evacuation plans so that as soon as a fire breaks out, it can be immediately responded to.
- Make sure communication channels (e.g. walkie talkies) with first response actors like the Civil Defense, are working well in preparation for a possible incident.

✓ **Create Fire Points and Distribute Fire Fighting Equipment**

- Establish fire points in camps where water facilities and fire-fighting equipment can be accessed to respond to fire incidents, in coordination with relevant clusters (CCCM, Shelter/NFI, WASH).
- Distribute fire response materials, including fire extinguishers and first aid kits, to facilitate people to respond to fires and treat possible injuries. Replace used fire extinguishers with new ones and check the validity of the fire extinguishers. It is recommended to accompany the distribution of fire extinguishers with guidance/training on how to use them, and to ensure that women are included in such trainings.

✓ **Utilise Information Management Tools**

- Coordinate with the CCCM Cluster Coordination Team and utilize the [ISIMM Plus](#) tool to monitor the fire response in IDP sites and report on gaps, specifically information on fire awareness, mitigation measures and provision of fire extinguishers.

✓ **Distribution of Appropriate Types of Heating and Cooking Fuel**

- Provide appropriate heating and cooking devices, and fuel types (cash, voucher or in-kind) to the most vulnerable households, in line with the SNFI [Guidance Note on the Shelter and NFI Response in NWS](#).
- Avoid storing fuel in large quantities, and make sure that the fuel type is appropriate for the stove. Fuel and stoves of the same type can be distributed to new IDPs in batches.
- Stoves and pipes should be properly connected, ensuring that the exhaust is directing the smoke outside through a safe hole in the tent/shelter.
- Distribute electric power regulators connected to batteries to avoid explosion incidents.

✓ **Improved Shelter Solutions, Living Spaces and Facilities**

- Provide good quality, non-flammable tents to replace torn and poor-quality ones.
- Increase shelter capacity and improve living conditions in the present shelters.
- Provide additional living space, allocating separate kitchen spaces for cooking and washing to avoid setting fire in the living space.
- Provide communal cooking facilities/spaces where people can use fuel to cook safely and away from the living spaces. However, given cultural factors and the ongoing COVID-19 situation, these may not be widely used at present.

✓ **Ensure Proper Site Planning and Reduce Fire Hazards**

- Maintain sites so they are clean. Prevent burning garbage and provide garbage collection bins. Raise awareness in collaboration with the WASH Cluster.
- Ensure proper site planning, including establishing communal kitchens in IDPs sites. Fire breaks should be incorporated into the site's design.
- Site planning support, including links to trainings and resources, is available on the Shelter/NFI Cluster's [SNFI Site Planning Support Page](#).

✓ **Advocacy**

- Advocate with donors to highlight the fire response needs, including funding for the distribution of fire extinguishers and fuel/stoves for the most vulnerable households.
- Advocate for better quality emergency shelters.
- Advocate for better transitional shelters and more dignified shelters that can resist fires.
- Advocate with site managers for safe electrical networking at the family level.
- Advocate for improved access to sites.

Fire Response Measures

✓ **Follow Key IEC Messages**

- Stop, Drop and Roll - If a person's clothes are on fire, they should stop where they are, drop to the ground, and roll to extinguish flames.
- Tent on Fire - If a tent is on fire, check there is no-one inside, only then knock down the tent to help stop the fire from spreading.
- Burns - Cool the burn area with cold water or a wet cloth immediately.
- More resources are available from the [CCCM Cluster IEC Materials](#).

✓ **Utilise Fire Points**

- Firefighting equipment and water facilities should be centralized at fire points, so they can be easily and quickly accessed in case of a fire.

✓ **Alert Emergency Responders**

- Local actors like the Civil Defense are equipped and experienced in responding to emergency situations including fire incidents.

✓ **Incident Reports**

- Make sure to report the incident in an urgent manner, providing the required information to the CCCM Cluster so the report can be immediately circulated, and the response coordinated. An example of a CCCM Cluster's incident report can be found in Annex 1.

Different Cluster's Activities

Fire hazards and effective mitigation and response measures need to be taken into account during the project design and implementation phases, and the Cluster Coordination Teams are available to provide further support in this regard. For the purpose of providing more specific guidance to CCCM and SNFI Cluster members planning interventions, this table outlines the related activities according to each Cluster.

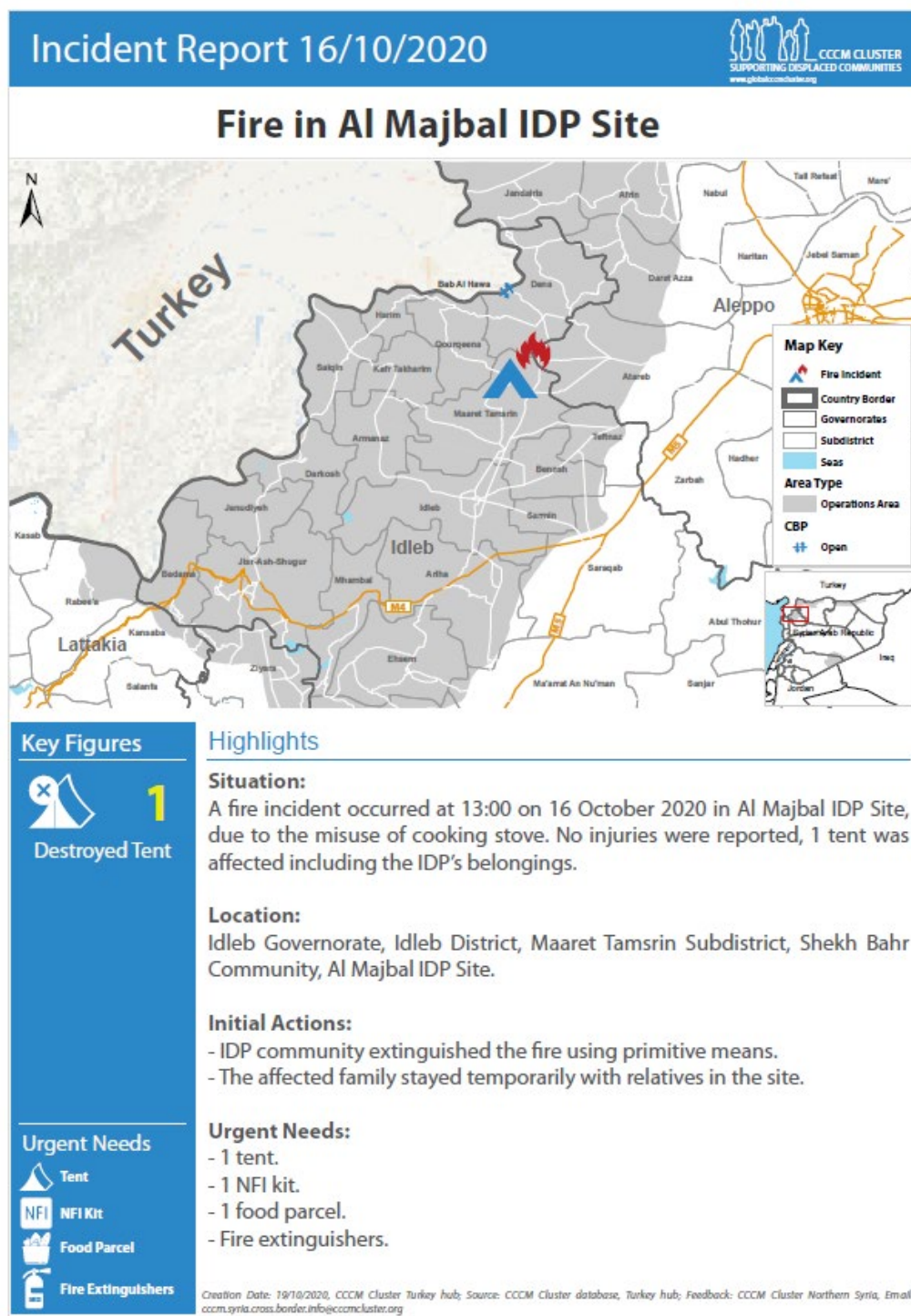
CCCM Cluster	Shelter/NFI Cluster
Fire Response Camp Committees	Deliver NFIs (fuel, stoves, cash/voucher modalities etc)
Fire Warden Systems	Provision of Proper Shelters
Fire Response Taskforce	Monitor Shelter Situation
Fire Response Trainings	Advocacy for Better, More Dignified Shelters
Provision of Fire Response Equipment	Site Planning Support
Monitoring/Coordinating IDP Site's Services	Shelter/Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Repair
Incident Reporting	Guidance on Shelter/NFI Assistance
Information Management in IDP Sites	Winterization Timely Assistance
Awareness Raising	Awareness Raising

Useful Links

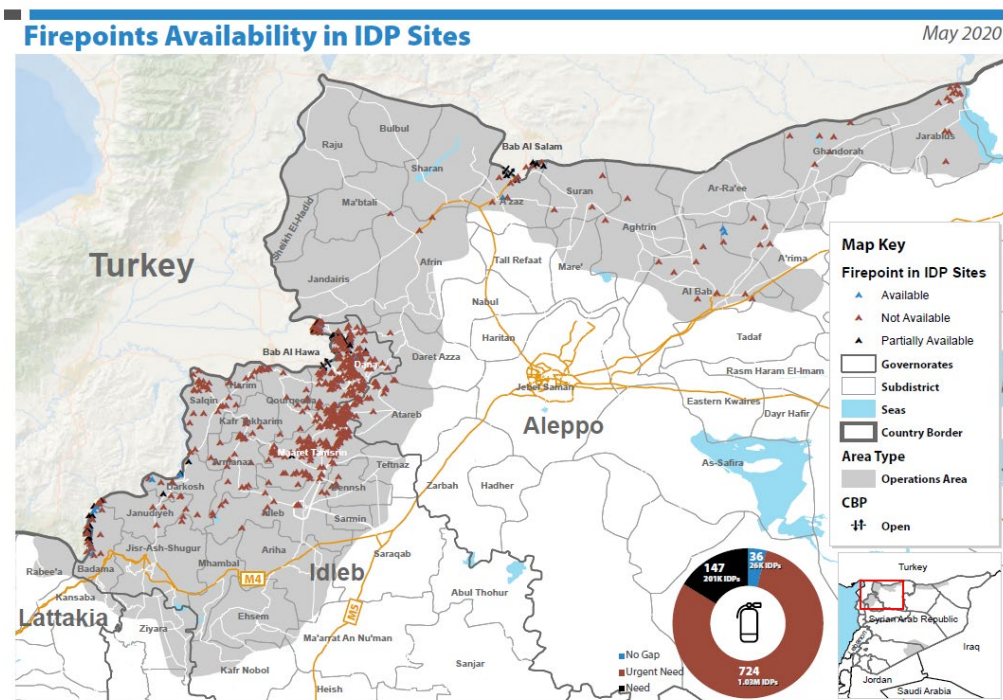
- [2015 Camp Management Toolkit](#)
- [The Sphere Handbook – Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response](#)
- [UNHCR Emergency Handbook](#)
- [CCCM Camp and Collective Centre Establishment Guidance Note](#)
- [IDP Sites Integrated Monitoring Matrix](#)
- [IDP Sites Integrated Monitoring Matrix Plus](#)
- [CCCM Cluster IEC Materials](#)
- [CCCM COVID-19 Guidance Note](#)
- [SNFI COVID-19 Guidance Note](#)
- [SNFI Guidance Note on the Shelter and NFI Response in NWS](#)
- [SNFI Site Planning Support Page](#)
- [SNFI IEC Safety Material \(Arabic\)](#)

Annexes

Annex 1: CCCM Incident Report Example:



Annex 2 – CCCM Data on Fire-points in IDP Sites:



Annex 3 – SNFI IEC Materials on Fire Safety:



نصائح عامة

- يفضل عند اقتناء مدفأة اختيار الأنواع ذات النوعية الجيدة والموثوقة والتي تفي بمعايير الجودة والسلامة.
- ضمان أن توصيلات/ بوابي المدفأة مثبتة وموصولة بشكل جيد وفي مكان لا يعيق حركة الأفراد.
- اختيار موقع مناسب لوضع المدفأة فيه بحيث لا تعيق الحركة فتكون عرضة للسقوط على قطع الأثاث أو السجاد.
- مراقبة الأطفال وتجنب تركهم منفردين واللعب بالقرب من المدافئ.
- تجنب وضع المدفأة قريباً من الستائر والمواد القابلة للاشتعال.
- تفادي استخدام المدفأة لأغراض الطهي إن لم تكن مخصصة لذلك خاصة بوجود الأطفال حولها.
- مراقبة المدفأة باستمرار وعدم الذهاب للنوم وهي مشتعلة خوفاً من الحريق أو الاختناق.
- الاحتفاظ ببطانية حريق مناسبة وصالحة للاستعمال والتدريب على استخدامها.
- تجنب تخزين الوقود في مكان قريب من المدفأة/ تصل إليه أشعة الشمس أو في متناول الأطفال.
- تخزين الوقود بعبوات محكمة الإغلاق مخصصة للتخزين.

ومع تعدد أنواع المدافئ المستخدمة خلال فصل الشتاء، ينبغي معرفة كيفية التعامل مع كل نوع بحسب طبيعته.

نصائح عند استخدام مدفأة الكاز



- الحرص على أن يكون خزان الوقود الخاص بالمدفأة مغلق ومثبت بشكل يمنع السقوط.
- يجب عدم ترك مدافئ الكاز مشتعلة أثناء النوم، خوفاً من زيادة نسبة أكسيد الكربون في الجو المغلق للغرفة، وكذلك زيادة أول أكسيد الكربون السام الذي يحل محل الأكسجين في الدم مؤدياً للإصابة بالاختناق.
- عدم استخدام مدفأة الكاز داخل الحمام أثناء الاستحمام، الأمر الذي يؤدي إلى زيادة نسبة الغازات السامة والخفيفة الناتجة عن عملية الاحتراق.
- الابتعاد عن تعبئة المدافئ بالكاز أثناء اشتعالها، فذلك يزيد اللمب بشكل مفاجئ مما يؤدي لنشوب حريق.

نصائح للتعامل مع مدفأة الغاز



- تفقد الخرطوم الوصل بين الاسطوانة وجسم المدفأة واستبدال بالعدة التسرب "الجدة" مع كل اسطوانة، بالإضافة إلى ضرورة التأكد من صلاحية الصمام لأن ذلك يقلل من خطورتها.
- التأكد من عدم تسرب الغاز قبل إشعالها، والتأكد من إغلاق الاسطوانة جيداً عند إطفائها.

نصائح عند استخدام مدفأة الديزل/المازوت



- الحرص على أن يكون خزان الوقود الخاص بالمدفأة مغلق ومثبت بشكل يمنع السقوط.
- يجب عدم ترك مدافئ الديزل مشتعلة أثناء النوم، خوفاً من زيادة نسبة ثاني أكسيد الكربون في الجو المغلق للغرفة، وكذلك زيادة أول أكسيد الكربون السام الذي يحل محل الأكسجين في الدم مؤدياً للإصابة بالاختناق.
- عدم استخدام مدفأة الديزل داخل الحمام أثناء الاستحمام، الأمر الذي يؤدي إلى زيادة نسبة الغازات السامة والخفيفة الناتجة عن عملية الاحتراق.

أما التدفئة التي تعمل باستخدام مادة الجفت (بيرين) فينبغي



- استخدام مدفأة مخصصة تفي باستخدام مادة الجفت (البيرين).
- تجنب حرق مادة الجفت (البيرين) داخل المنزل، وتعمل على إشعالها في الخارج للتخلص من الدخان الكثيف الناتج عن بدايات الاحتراق ثم نقلها إلى الداخل بواسطة المفاصل.
- وفيما يتعلق باستخدام مادة الجفت (البيرين) في صوبات البيوري فيجب العمل على تنظيفها باستمرار كون لوائح احتراق مادة الجفت تخلق شوائب مشبعة بالدهون تعمل على إغلاق وتلف منافذ التهوية لهذه الصوبات.