

How to Build a Winter Shelter for Cats

MATERIALS :

- A 100L or larger plastic storage bin, which can be purchased from Home Hardware, Canadian Tire or other hardware supplier. We used one with a hinged lid. This one is 32.03" x 20.25" x 16.63" (81.3 x 41.4 x 42.2cm)



- A sheet of blue or pink extruded foam 2 ft x 8ft x 1-1/2" thick (NOT the white 'beaded' foam)



- 6 nuts & bolts (size #8-32 x 1/2"). Note : 4 nuts & bolts will do if that's all you have.
- 4" length of 6" dia. O-pipe as used for drainage. I used this because of the ribbed design. You will see why when it is being installed.
- Bedding : use **straw** – never use hay because it is not dense enough. Do not put blankets in the shelter because they will hold moisture and make the cats cold. Never put water inside the shelter because it will spill and soak the bedding.

TOOLS :

- Utility knife with sharp blade for cutting foam. It is easiest to cut about half-way through, then press on the reverse side and break foam all the way through.
- Sandpaper – 80 grit for rounding off corners so sections of foam will fit into the corners better.
- Screw driver and socket to fit nuts.
- To cut out the entrance hole in the plastic bin I used an oscillating saw such as a Fein, Black and Decker or other brand as sold in hardware stores.



- Optional : jig saw



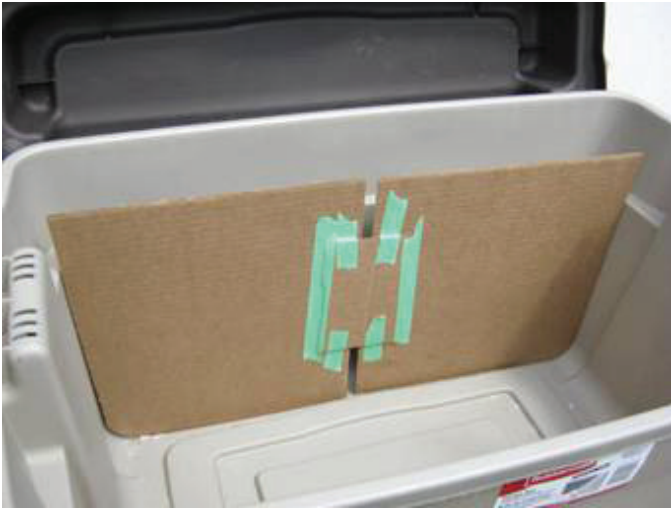
Note : if power tools aren't available, a simple utility knife can also be used.

Materials for this shelter would cost on average :

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Bin | \$15 -\$20 |
| Sheet of 1-1/2" foam | \$20 -\$23 |
| Bolts / Nuts | \$2 -\$3 /pkg. |
| 4" or 6" dia. O-PiPe | Very inexpensive, or free if you are able to get a scrap piece. |

CONSTRUCTION

These bins are not square. They are tapered and have rounded corners. In a case like this I will make templates out of cardboard so I only have to cut the pieces once.



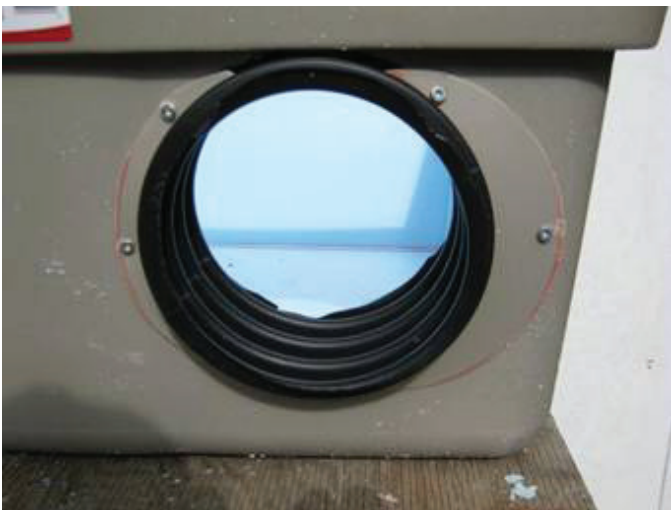
1. First operation should be to cut the foam sides, then whatever you use to make the tunnel out of, trace its outline on the side of the bin. Cut out the hole in the plastic, then place the foam against the inside and trace the hole. Cut the hole through the foam.



2. Then cut the foam for the bottom. You want it to be a press-fit, in between the sides but the full length of the bottom. Cut the two ends and have them sized to be a press-fit. That is, cut the pieces so that when you put them in place, you have to use a slight pressure to push them into place.



3. Now, take the disk you cut out of the plastic side and from it cut two crescent-shaped pieces as shown in the photo. Cut them so that the inside dia. is the same as the outside dia. of the pipe. Then place one on each side of the pipe, at the bottom of the groove. Drill three holes in each through the crescent and the bin. Install bolts and nuts in the second groove and this will hold the tunnel in place. Now you can start installing the foam liner.



4. Install liner and lid, then add straw for bedding.



5. Have cat inspect shelter!