Guidance for humanitarian organisations and local authorities

Winter kits 2026–2027

Needs-based winter assistance: one core kit for everyone + 4 add-on types for local conditions

Consistent with Shelter Cluster Ukraine recommendations 2026–2027, the Winter Support programme (CMU Resolution No. 1084), Sphere standards and ICRC/IFRC specifications

Ukrainian Red Cross Society
and the Coordination Platform for Humanitarian Response at the Office of the President of Ukraine

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Purpose

Why this guide

Short, practical guidance for winter 2026–2027, based on URCS experience, national guidance and international standards.

Who it is for

- UN agencies, international and national humanitarian organisations
- Oblast and raion administrations
- Hromadas and village heads
- In-kind donors

What it helps with

- Choosing the modality and contents for a specific community
- Not spending money on things people don’t need
- Avoiding duplication

What it does not replace

- Shelter Cluster Ukraine technical recommendations
- The state Winter Support programme
- Restoring heating, electricity and water

This guidance is advisory. Coordination runs through the Shelter Cluster, oblast administrations and hromadas.

Principles

Six rules for good winter assistance

1 · Needs first, not stock

A needs assessment decides the contents. Assistance should meet the need, not be symbolic.

Shelter Cluster 2026–2027

2 · Cash where markets work

Shops and safe access — cash. No functioning market — in-kind.

Shelter Cluster 2026–2027; UNHCR

3 · No duplication

One type of heating support per household. Check Winter Support and RAIS+.

CMU Resolution No. 1084; Shelter Cluster

4 · Safety first

No fire or carbon monoxide risk. Stoves and gas only with installation and a CO detector.

Shelter Cluster 2026–2027; EN 50291-1

5 · Inclusion

The most vulnerable first. Door-to-door delivery, the right sizes, clear information.

Shelter Cluster 2026–2027; Sphere

6 · Accountability

People know what they receive and where to turn. Results are checked through post-distribution monitoring.

Shelter Cluster 2026–2027; CHS

Decision logic

Four steps to the right kit

Step 1

Assess needs

Housing and heating type, access to power, water and shops, security, household vulnerability.

→

Step 2

Check what’s already provided

Winter Support (Resolution No. 1084), other partners’ assistance (RAIS+), hromada data.

→

Step 3

Choose the modality

Markets working and accessible — cash. If not — in-kind. The two can be combined.

→

Step 4

Build the kit

Core kit + add-ons by community type (1–4) + targeted add-ons for the most vulnerable.

When. The season runs 16 October – 15 April. Most support by end of October; newly displaced people October–March.

A kit is short-term support. It does not replace heating, electricity or water.

Core kit · 1 per person

Core kit: ~20 items in one backpack

Light and communication

- Power bank, 20,000 mAh
- Universal charging cable
- Rechargeable camping lantern
- Headlamp
- Batteries

Warmth

- Fleece blanket
- Thermos flask
- Disposable hand, foot and body warmers

Water and household

- Collapsible water container
- Candles and a lighter

Safety

- First aid kit
- Waterproof document pouches

Mobility

- Backpack for the whole kit
- Leaflet on safe use

For home, evacuation, shelters and transit.

Candles only together with fire safety guidance.

Based on: URCS practice; Shelter Cluster 2026–2027 winter items list; State Emergency Service (DSNS) guidance on preparing for outages. Power bank specs: see “Technical specifications”.

Type 1 of 4

Frontline communities

Situation. Shelling, the longest outages, risk of sudden evacuation, difficult delivery.

> **Everything must fit in a backpack and work off-grid. Mobility matters more than volume.**

Important. Markets often don’t function here, so in-kind support comes first. Deliver early; agree routes and lists with the hromada and village heads.
Shelter Cluster 2026–2027

Add to the core kit

Per person

- High thermal blanket — see technical specifications
- Thermal underwear
- Extra hand, foot and body warmers
- Emergency foil blanket — for evacuation, with instructions

Type 2 of 4

Large cities with central heating

Situation. In high-rise buildings, power cuts can also cut heating and water, and stop the lifts.

> **People stay at home in a flat that keeps getting colder. They need light, charging, water and body warmth.**

Important. Electric heaters at scale in high-rises — only after checking the building's electrical capacity. Based on Shelter Cluster recommendations 2026–2027

Add to the core kit

Per person

- Warm blanket (medium thermal or better)

Per household

- Extra water storage containers
- Window and door insulation (draught strips, film)

Type 3 of 4

Rural and remote communities

Situation. Private houses with stove heating, far from shops and services, power restored more slowly.

> **Here the home itself can be heated — so the focus is on independent heating and fuel.**

Important. One type of heating support per household. In Winter Support communities, first check who has already received UAH 19,400. CMU Resolution No. 1084; Shelter Cluster 2026–2027

Add to the core kit

Per household

- Independent heating — with installation and a CO detector
- Fuel: firewood or briquettes — or cash to buy them
- Larger backup power (portable power station) — depending on conditions

Per person

- Warm blanket (medium thermal or better)

Type 4 of 4

Northern and mountain areas, severe cold

Situation. Lower temperatures and longer cold spells.

> **A stronger warmth component: people must stay warm even in an unheated room.**

Important. Type 4 combines with Types 1–3. To see where cold risk is highest, use the Shelter Cluster Cold Spot Index 2026/27.

Add to the core kit

Per person

- Insulated blanket
- Winter sleeping bag
- Thermal underwear
- Warm socks — several pairs

Targeted support

Vulnerable groups: who needs more, and how

Priority groups

- People with disabilities or injuries
- People with chronic illness
- Older people (60+)
- Families with children under three
- Large and foster families
- Women, girls and children at risk
- Minority groups*
- Households in severe economic hardship

What to do in practice

- Door-to-door delivery for older people, people with disabilities and limited mobility
- Collect clothing sizes at registration
- Announce distribution schedules in advance
- Help unload and stack fuel
- Hot-water bottle for those who struggle to keep warm
- Damaged homes: materials to cover windows temporarily
- Re-check vulnerability during the season

Vulnerability criteria and practical requirements: Shelter Cluster Ukraine, Winterization Recommendations 2026–2027.

* Minorities: groups that make up less than half of a country’s population and share a common culture, religion or language (working definition of the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, 2019). Priority is set by need and barriers to access, not by group membership itself.

Targeted support

Electric blankets: an add-on, not part of the core kit

Appropriate when

- People find it hardest to keep warm: older age, limited mobility, disability
- There is at least intermittent power to charge the power bank
- They supplement warm blankets rather than replace them

Not appropriate when

- Power is out for days with nowhere to charge
- The model runs only on mains power (220 V)

Procurement requirements

What to put in the specification

- USB-powered; supplied together with a power bank
- Safety: compliance with IEC 60335-2-17 (electric blankets and pads)
- Power bank: IEC 62133-2, IEC 62368-1, UN 38.3
- Safe-use instructions in Ukrainian

Procuring thousands is realistic — this has already been done in Ukraine.

Indicative Shelter Cluster prices: USB heated blanket ~$18, power bank ~$25.

Warmth: blankets and clothing

Item	Minimum requirements	Source
High thermal blanket	150 × 200 cm; 600–1,000 g/m²; thermal resistance Rct ≥ 0.40 m²·K/W (ISO 11092); thickness ≥ 9.5 mm	ICRC/IFRC catalogue
Warm blanket (medium thermal)	150 × 200 cm; 400–700 g/m²; Rct ≥ 0.25 m²·K/W; thickness ≥ 6.5 mm	ICRC/IFRC catalogue
Thermal underwear, socks, winter clothing	One item per person per identified need; more sets of socks and thermal underwear where justified; collect sizes at registration	Shelter Cluster 2026–2027
Emergency foil blanket	Only for evacuation and emergencies; issue with instructions. Not a substitute for a warm blanket at home	Shelter Cluster 2026–2027

IOM and UNHCR use the same blanket specifications as the ICRC/IFRC.

Energy and safety

Item	Minimum requirements	Source
Power bank	≥ 20,000 mAh; battery IEC 62133-2, device IEC 62368-1, transport UN 38.3	IEC; UN
Electric blanket	USB-powered, supplied with a power bank; safety IEC 60335-2-17	IEC; Shelter Cluster
Carbon monoxide (CO) detector	Domestic use, EN 50291-1. Mandatory with every stove or gas heater	CENELEC; Shelter Cluster
Stoves and solid fuel	Only in buildings of up to two floors, with installation; firewood moisture ≤ 25%, proof of legal origin	Shelter Cluster 2026–2027
Gas heaters	Private houses only; cylinders not in living rooms, kept in a ventilated space; catalytic models are safer	Shelter Cluster 2026–2027

Running the response

Coordination, accountability, monitoring

Coordination

- Hromada, village heads, oblast administration — routes, lists, access
- Shelter Cluster hub — who is buying what, and where
- RAIS+ — duplication check before lists are approved
- Winter Support — no duplicate heating assistance

Information and feedback

- Leaflet: what people received, safe use, CO risk, where to turn
- Several information channels — connectivity is weak in frontline areas
- An accessible complaints and feedback mechanism

Monitoring

- Post-distribution monitoring using the joint Shelter Cluster tool
- Check whether homes actually got warmer
- Consistent packaging across locations to avoid perceptions of unfairness

Shelter Cluster Ukraine, Winterization Recommendations 2026–2027; Core Humanitarian Standard.

Value for money

How not to waste money

Common mistake	Better practice
Buying whatever is in the warehouse	Contents based on a needs assessment
Symbolic “a little for everyone” assistance	Fully meet the needs of those worst off
One identical kit for every region	Core kit + add-ons by community type
A foil blanket instead of a warm one	Thermal blanket for the home; foil only for evacuation
Cheap, uncertified power banks	Procure to the technical specifications
Items people won’t use	Only what is needed — lower cost, less waste

What this is based on

National and international standards

National

- **CMU Resolution No. 1084 of 3 September 2026** — Winter Support: UAH 19,400 per household in frontline communities of eight oblasts
- **Shelter Cluster Ukraine** — Winterization Recommendations 2026–2027 (v1.0, 21 September 2026): priorities, items, safety, timing, PDM
- **State Emergency Service (DSNS)** — guidance on preparing for emergencies and outages
- **URCS practice** — individual winter kit

International

- **Sphere** — minimum standards: thermal comfort, household items
- **ICRC/IFRC catalogue** — blanket specifications, also used by IOM and UNHCR
- **IEC / EN / UN** — 62133-2, 62368-1, 60335-2-17, EN 50291-1, UN 38.3
- **Shelter/NFI Cluster, North-West Syria** — core kit + separate winter modules
- **UNHCR** — consider cash first
- **Core Humanitarian Standard** — accountability to affected people

Key messages

Four things to remember

1. **Base the contents on needs: one core kit for everyone + add-ons for local conditions.**
2. **This winter, light, communication and water matter as much as warmth.**
3. **Don’t duplicate Winter Support or other partners’ assistance.**
4. **A kit is short-term support, not a substitute for heating, electricity or water.**

Technical standards, prices and cash transfer values: Shelter Cluster Ukraine, Winterization Recommendations 2026–2027 (v1.0, 21 September 2026).