CCCM CLUSTER
SUPPORTING DISPLACED COMMUNITIES

**MINIMUM STANDARDS ON FIRE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE IN THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Fire can be a significant cause of injury, death and loss of property in camps. Plans were put in place by CCCM and other partners across IDP and refugee camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to prevent and respond to fire incidents. These include establishing fire safety warden systems, providing training in partnership with the Civil Defence, developing information materials and conducting awareness raising campaigns, putting monitoring tools in place, establishing Fire Prevention/Response Task Forces, etc. Although fire prevention and response (FPR) initiatives are in place, there is a lack of a harmonized approach to FPR across camps in the different governorates.

While the responsibility and authority around FPR lies with the Civil Defence, their resources and capacity are overstretched due to the number of displaced persons being hosted in KRI. In light of that, partners operating in KRI highlighted the need of developing minimum standards to guide harmonized FPR activities. UNHCR, with the support of the CCCM Cluster, organized a workshop in KRI in April 2018 where humanitarian partners and government counterparts, including the Civil Defence, exchanged FRP best practices, lessons learned, and gaps, and discussed minimum standards.

The present document was developed by the CCCM Cluster based on the notes of the above-mentioned workshop and further consultations with technical colleagues in KRI, including from the Shelter and NFIs Cluster. The document outlines suggested minimum standards for FPR in six thematic areas, as follows:

- FPR awareness
- Firefighting community structures
- Fire extinguishers
- Electrical system
- Fire breaks
- Information management

The FPR activities outlined in the present document focus on community-based initiatives that aim to prevent fire incidents and contain fire at its source when it occurs.

## 2. FPR AWARENESS

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| ***Minimum standard 2.1.:*** **camp-wide awareness sessions are held at least twice a year, and include mandatory practical sessions.** |
| ***Minimum standard 2.2.:*** **awareness sessions are tailored to women, men, and children and pay particular attention to persons with specific needs.** |
| ***Minimum standard 2.3.:*** **awareness sessions are conducted both at the community and household-levels based on the identified needs.** |

Wardens and their assistants (see point 3 – firefighting community structures) should be engaged in the awareness raising activities, including in delivering peer to peer sessions alongside the Civil Defence.

In line with the season, awareness raising activities may include topics such as:

- Electrical faults - raise awareness on their hazardous connections throughout the camp layout. Corresponding mitigation measures include awareness raising to covering bare wiring using quality electric insulation tape or cache cables, raising wiring from contact with shelter material/wet surfaces, have electric maintenance/repairs done only by trained electricians, not doing irregular connections, etc.
- Cooking practices - cooking fire risks can be divided into equipment and behaviour. Ideally, awareness should be raised at household-level, with focus on the use of equipment (overloaded

electric sockets, gas tanks, positioning of the stove, use of gas cylinders/fuel and storage, etc.); and on behaviour (smell of gas, awareness on the use of single sockets, keep hazards out of the reach of children, never leaving cooking unattended, keep kerosene stoves on a firm base, turning electrical appliances off after use, etc.).

- Shelter – fire risks related to fire spreading through flammable household materials, the need of ensuring adequate space between shelters and installing chimneys in the case of RHUs. Communities must be aware that immediately exiting the tent taking children with them prior to collapse
- Other – awareness on risks related to using candles, smoking inside shelters, etc.
- Fire response – awareness on firefighting techniques and response to fire-related injuries.

| 3. FIREFIGHTING COMMUNITY STRUCTURES |
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| ***Minimum standard 3.1.:*** **a warden system is in place and either the warden or their assistant is a female.** |
| ***Minimum standard 3.2.:*** **each warden/warden assistant covers 100 families or blocks with similar number of families.** |
| ***Minimum standard 3.3.:*** **wardens/warden assistants have clear ToRs that include both prevention and response related responsibilities.** |
| ***Minimum standard 3.4.:*** **wardens/warden assistants receive an induction training and quarterly refreshers.** |

Where wardens and their assistants do not possess expertise to monitor electrical hazards, other community-based structures such as a Technical Volunteers Committee (TVC) can be established. The TVC is a group of qualified people who have experience with electrical equipment and who are able to help monitor electrical systems and report to camp management when hazards are identified.

Where appropriate, regular checks of shelters by the relevant firefighting community structure should be conducted in order to identify fire hazards, particularly electrical ones, at the household level. Female wardens and/or their assistants should be prioritized for regular checks of shelters of female-headed households. This activity should be prioritized in periods of risk, in line with the fire incident trends in a particular area/site.

| 4. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS |
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| ***Minimum standard 4.1.:*** **fire extinguishers (6 kg) which contain information on the date of production, date of distribution, date of refilling (if applicable), and custodian are available in the camp.** |
| ***Minimum standard 4.2.:*** **fire extinguishers are assigned to a trained custodian[1] from the IDP community, and are placed 150 cm above the ground.** |
| ***Minimum standard 4.3.:*** **fire extinguishers' custodians shake them every two weeks to increase the durability of the item.** |
| ***Minimum standard 4.4.:*** **each fire extinguisher covers 4 shelters, and the distance between fire points does not exceed 50 meters.** |
| ***Minimum standard 4.5.:*** **all community members are able to access the fire extinguishers whenever needed.** |
| ***Minimum standard 4.6.:*** **fire extinguishers are checked every six months, and refilled or replaced as needed.** |

[1] Individual responsible for protecting, caring for, and maintaining a fire extinguisher assigned to them.

Wardens should be engaged in monitoring custodians in line with the responsibilities assigned to them.

Due to the challenges related to varying layouts of the campsites, the distance between fire points may be reviewed depending on how congested is the site, the shelter type (tent, caravan, RHU), and the presence of Civil Defence fire brigades.

Where a fire station/brigade is serving a camp, during trainings, emergency response drills could be conducted in order to assess response time and discuss any challenges as needed.

Where relevant, cost analysis should be conducted to assess whether investing in fire trucks is a more cost effective option.

| **5. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM** |
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| ***Minimum standard 5.1.:*** **monitoring of the electrical systems is carried out monthly by wardens, maintenance committees or any other relevant community-based structure in a given camp.** |
| ***Minimum standard 5.2.:*** **a reporting mechanism is in place so that identified electric hazards are reported to camp management.** |

When relevant, electric hazards related to unsafe behavior by the IDP community may also be addressed through household-level awareness raising (see point 2 – FPR Awareness).

Where applicable, TVC should be engaged in monitoring and potentially addressing electric hazards in communal areas and at the household level (see point 3 – TVC).

| **6. FIRE BREAKER** |
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| ***Minimum standard 6.1.:*** **a 30 m firebreak is in place between every 300 meters of built-up area.** |
| ***Minimum standard 6.2.:*** **there is a minimum of 2 meters (but preferably twice the overall height of any structure) between individual shelters.** |

The fire break aims to isolate a group of shelters from fire risk. The isolation method is to create additional space between a group of shelters in order to prevent fire from spreading from one area of the camp to another.

In situations of protracted displacement, spontaneous self-made shelters extensions are usually built in an ad-hoc manner, making it difficult to have adequate fire breaks between shelters. This requires community engagement to highlight the risks of having congested shelters, and advocacy for more sustainable shelter solutions (solid structures).

In terms of fire response, wardens and the community as a whole should be aware that, when possible, they should dissemble structures connecting shelters that permits fire to spread from a shelter to another, taking into consideration wind direction.

| **7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT** |
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| ***Minimum standard 7.1.:*** **a fire incident reporting form is in place, and contains fire location (camp and specific location in the site), cause of the fire, number of shelters damaged and destroyed, number of injuries (disaggregated by age and gender), number of fatalities (disaggregated by age and gender), and the fire response details.** |
| ***Minimum standard 7.2.:*** **a fire incident matrix is used to keep track of all fire incidents based on information collected through the fire incident reporting form and information from the Civil Defence/camp police reports/etc.** |

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| ***Minimum standard 7.3.:*** **trend analysis using data from the fire incident matrix is done every 3 months, and is used to inform fire prevention activities.[2]** |
| ***Minimum standard 7.4.:*** **general FPR information is available, and includes an overview of the situation in a given site (hazards, recommended actions, 3Ws, etc.), information about wardens/assistants and custodians of fire extinguishers.** |

Following a fire incident, meetings with the affected household(s), the warden/warden assistant responsible for the area, and other relevant community members should be held to understand how the fire happened, what allowed the fire to spread, if there were challenges using fire extinguishers or other fire response tools, if the fire extinguishers need to be refilled or replaced, etc. Depending on the findings, further support may be provided to the warden/warden assistant and other community members as required.

Trend analysis should look at fire causes, time of the year, number of injuries and fatalities of specific groups, and any other relevant information that can help understand past fire incidences and predict potential future fire occurrence. Trend analysis must be used to inform fire prevention activities.

[2] Or less frequently in case there are no fire incidents in the three months following the last trend analysis.