

# ALL BREEDS REQUIRE SHELTER

Adequate shelter for dogs is a legal requirement in Alberta. “Adequate” will vary according to the season and the breed of dog. In summer, all dogs need protection against the sun, rain, and hail. In winter, dogs need protection from the cold, snow, and wind. For puppies and some short-haired or small breeds, the only way to provide adequate winter shelter is to keep them inside your house except for short trips outside.



## How Can I Ensure My Dog Has Adequate Shelter?

The simplest long-term solution is to build or buy a year-round doghouse.

### Planning to Build a Doghouse?

Find plans on our website:

[www.albertaspca.org/animal-care/companion-animals/dogs/dog-house/](http://www.albertaspca.org/animal-care/companion-animals/dogs/dog-house/)

*The vision of the Alberta SPCA is that every animal in Alberta be treated humanely.*

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# SHELTER FOR DOGS





# THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A DOG HOUSE WILL VARY DEPENDING ON THE BREED, SIZE AND AGE OF THE DOG

## Size of Doghouse

The shelter should be large enough to be comfortable, but not so large that the dog cannot warm it with its body heat. To decide how big to build the doghouse, measure your dog from feet to shoulder. Allow 36 square inches of floor space for each inch of shoulder height. The floor area should be square rather than long because dogs curl up to sleep. The ceiling should be about two inches above the dog's head when it is sitting.

## Doghouse Materials

Common materials for a wooden doghouse include 2"x2" lumber and sheathed with ½" weatherproof plywood. Insulation is used between two sheets of plywood on all exterior walls, including the floor and ceiling.

A perfectly acceptable alternative is a shelter constructed of straw bales. The bales are used as bricks to build an enclosed area which can then be bedded with more straw.

## Blocks

To avoid dampness and prevent heat loss, the floor of the doghouse should not sit directly on the ground. This can be achieved using blocks or a 2"x4" base. Ideally, the base prevents wind from blowing under the doghouse.

## Roof

The doghouse should have a sloping, weather-tight roof. A hinged roof makes the doghouse easier to clean and provides access to the dog in case of emergency.

## Door

A piece of 2"x4" placed at the bottom of the doorway will stop the snow from piling up in the sleeping area.

You can also use a flap of heavy carpet or canvass as a door. It should be cut long enough that it doesn't let snow in the bottom and it should be flexible enough that the dog can enter and exit easily.

## Bedding

Bedding will provide additional insulation in cold weather. However, blankets, carpets or quilts are not good because they become damp and freeze, chilling the dog. A better choice is straw, hay or shavings. Straw is the best insulator and costs only \$1 or \$2 a bale.

## Requirements of A Proper Dog House



**SIZE** appropriate for the size of the dog so he can stand up and turn around, but small enough to trap in the dog's body heat



**INSULATED** in the walls, roof and floor to ensure the dog's body heat is trapped inside



**PROTECTION FROM ELEMENTS** which could include a door cover or to place the dog house in a sheltered location



**DRY BEDDING** Straw is ideal as it allows moisture to move away from the dog



This doghouse still requires covering over the door



1½" rigid insulation is used in this dog house