Fire Safety – SOPs

The Executive Unit and CCCM Cluster are gravely concerned about the increasing number of fire incidents in IDP settlements across Aden AoR, where up to 40[1] fire incidents have been recorded under Marib hub between January and May 2022, comparable to 12 incidents under Aden Hub. The severity of the fires varies from case to case, with 1[2] fatalities occurring in IDP settlements and 9[3] fatalities occurring outside of IDP sites. Despite the presence of fire mitigation measures in these sites, their efficacy in fire mitigation and response needs to be strengthened.
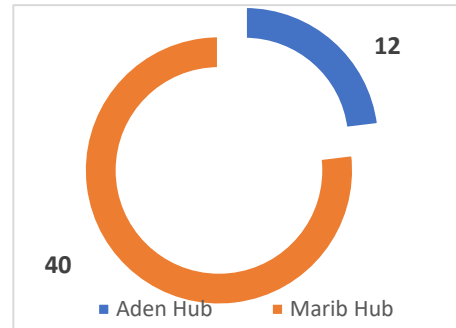

Figure 1 Fire Incidents reported

Fire Safety TWiG is temporarily formed to provide recommendations on both fire prevention methods as well as measures to strengthen the response to fire incidents when these occur, informed by in depth analysis of the causes of fire eruption, fire spread, and the identification of potential weaknesses in the existing fire safety measures.

Goal:

Reducing fire incidents' severity through ensuring an enabling and safe environment for IDPs in their settlements.

Objectives:

- Fire Safety TWiG will serve as a platform for key clusters[4] and humanitarian agencies to track, monitor, share and review assessment models for fire incidents.
- Inform decision making through capitalizing on the good practices and improve and operationalize Cluster tools, guidelines, SOPs and fire mitigation/response activities and mechanisms.
- Update Clusters' partners on a regular basis on status of work-in-progress.

Membership:

- Executive Unit for IDPs (Co-Chair)
- CCCM Cluster (coordination team and 4 nominated technical partners; IOM, ACTED, SHS/UNHCR, PAH) (Chair).
- UNOCHA (Observer)
- Shelter Cluster (coordination team and 1 nominated partner; IOM).
- WASH Cluster (one nominated partner; PAH)

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[1] Reference ExU Fire Incidents reports/ CCCM AI
[2] Reference CCCM AI
[3] Reference ExU Fire Incidents reports
[4] Cluster involved in fire incidents mitigation and response

Actions taken:

- Kick off meeting was conducted on 31st of May, aiming to formally trigger the FS-TWiG and review the group's TORs.
- FS-TWiG organized go-and-see visits in IDP sites where fire incidents occurred recently, 5 IDP sites based on their history of fire incidents. The FMWG team conducted two days field visit to 5 selected IDPs hosting sites managed by different CCCM partners based on the fire incident history and huge density among the sites. Through the visits, information was observed and considered. FGDs were conducted in each of the 5 visited sites with the community relevant to the fire incidents such as effected population, fire safety committee, fire warden FPs, site manager, including men and women. The most common causes of fire incidents were highlighted to support in clarifying the process of fire preparedness, mitigation, and response.
- FS-TWiG discussed and analyzed the previous fire incidents and gather good practices on the most efficient activities and/or actions which supported strengthening fire preparedness and mitigation. Through shared outputs and recommendations, from various partners, clusters, and ExU in identifying the sources/causes of fire events and developing/contextualizing fire incident SOPs.

The below outcomes contain fire incidents breakout/fire spread causes

Fire sources and spread causes

1. Electricity

Most of the IDPs HHs connected with electricity without installing electrical breakers in case of short circuit, and when the load is high with poor quality wire or not sufficient for high load, it starts burning then spreading the fire to the tents.

Moreover, arbitrary wire connection, low-quality used wires and deteriorate wires shielding trigger short circuits resulting in fire incidents.

It is noticeable that majority of fire incidents increases during summer season, it is though those wires are less durability in the hot weather.

The lack of electrical hazard awareness is a noticeable cause of the fire incidents.

Figure 2 Arbitrary wire connection

2.　　Cooking practice:

Given the culture norms in Yemen, IDP families prefer individual inside shelter cooking arrangements which impose a heavy burden on scarce energy resource and greater fire hazard. IDPS are using one gas cylinder for both devices (Stove and Gas Oven) using short pipe with a close distance between all three connected Tools and without kitchen ventilation. This could get more dangerous by the kitchens unequipped with the minimum materials and tools which are basic for safe connection of devices and stoves.

Firewood fuel also can be a potential fire incident cause and spread, if safe cooking practices not followed, such as the use of mud guards, windscreens, safe clay ovens, and proper spacing from stored flammable material.

3.　　Other fire incident causes:

- Garbage fires
  Incorrect wastes disposal ways (burning) could be a cause for fire incident particularly if the wasted were collected in wrong places, besides IDP Shelters.
- Fireworks and or children's mess with fires
- Shelter type [materials]
  Some shelter types are flammable which burned and spread quickly
- Arbitrary shelters layout/design [improper distance between shelter units] (fire spread)
  None following the shelter design/site plan guidance by humanitarian agencies, especially by literal partners and charities.
- Windy weather (fire spread)
- HLP issues
  IDPs HHs in some sites are restricted by landlords to use simple/makeshift kitchen stoves which is less safe. Self-settled Sites: The majority of IDP sites in Marib are self-settled and have not been designed according to the international standards. As a result, sites often lack fire breaks between shelters, and do not have fire points or dedicated spaces for cooking. Most sites have connected tents and shelters, and if one tent catches fire, it can easily spread.

Figure 3 Arbitrary shelters layout

Preparedness, prevention, and response Standard procedures

FS-TWiG agreed on a set of activities to mitigate fire risks

1. **Prevention measures**
   o Public electricity corporation with support from ExU and CCCM partners to conduct awareness on electrical hazards/risks reduction, focusing on:
     - Emphasizing on the legal connection importance
     - Awareness on the safe wiring methods and its importance in reducing the fire risks
     - Enhance on the importance of a technical support during wiring/connection

- Explain the concept of power overload, its risks, and results with enhancing the importance of a technical support when connecting a new device

Awareness methodology:
- Awareness sessions should be held at least twice a year and include mandatory practical sessions.
- Awareness sessions are tailored to women, men, and children and pay particular attention to persons with specific needs.
- Awareness sessions are conducted both at the community and household-levels based on the identified needs.
- Distribution of IEC materials for IDP HHs in the sites

o ExU and local authorities to advocate towards public electricity corporation for IDP site electricity network improvements (HHs level, Low voltage, high voltage)
- ExU to advocate with the public electricity corporation to conduct technical maintenance to the sites suffering from connection issues at site and HHs levels

o Advocate with CCCM partners to strengthen fire safety committees/ wardens' structure in the sites
- A warden system is in place and either the warden or their assistant is a female.
- Wardens/warden assistants have clear ToRs that include both prevention and response related responsibilities.
- Wardens/warden assistants receive an induction training and quarterly refreshers.

o Public electricity corporation with support from ExU and CCCM partners to conduct technical capacity building for the maintenance/safety committees
- Increase the number of the safety committees and coordinate/facilitate for training them by the public electricity corporation to ensure the existence of the technical support in the site.
- Through the trained fire warden and or the public electricity corporation support will ensure that the IDPs HHs are using safe circuits breakers.
- Monitoring of the electrical systems is carried out monthly by wardens, maintenance committees or any other relevant community-based structure in each camp.
- A reporting mechanism is in place so that identified electric hazards are reported to camp management.

o Advocate with the SNFI cluster team to enhance the type and or design of the shelter and explore alternatives to distributing flammable Shelter kits.

o Advocate with ExU to negotiate with landlords allowing improved kitchen settings,

o Advocate with the donors and the national cluster team for the kitchen layout improvement

o Advocate with the CCCM partners for the maintenance kits provision
- 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.
- Fire extinguishers are assigned to a trained wardens from the IDP community and are placed 150 cm above the ground.
- Fire wardens shake fire extinguisher every two weeks to increase the durability of the item.

- All community members can access the fire extinguishers whenever needed.
- fire extinguishers are checked every six months and refilled or replaced as needed.
  o Awareness on safe cooking practices
  o Advocate with bilateral partners, charities, CCCM and SNFI clusters for a good quality kitchen equipment provision.
  o Advocate with CCCM cluster partners for children's awareness sessions on risk of fires/fireworks.
  o Advocate with the WASH cluster team to enhance their role in awareness and actions in terms of the SWM
  o Civil Defense provide further support in training the fire warden and community about how to minimize the risks to prevent fires and how to respond to fires quickly and effectively once incident happen.
  o Advocate for Civil Defense interventions in large scale fire incidents; Civil Defense contacts should be provided to site fire wardens
  o Conduct first aid awareness sessions with focus on how to deal with burned cases during fire incidents

2. **Preparedness measures**
   o Advocate for extending the fire extinguisher no. to 1 fire extinguisher for each 5 HHs as recommended by the community and the FMWG team
   o Adapt the fire extinguisher distribution according to the site density and distance
   o Establishment of fire points, buckets, and fire blankets

3. **Response SOPs**
   o CCCM Managed sites
   After fire incident happen in managed IDP site
   - Fire assessment to be done after the fire incident within 24 hours and needs/damages shall be referred to the service providers by only the CCCM partners with keeping the ExU SFP involved/aware; needs shall be covered within 72 hours from the fire incident.
   - In case no action was taken by the CCCM partners towards fire incident or the ExU S FP within 48 hours, the ExU FP at the Governorate level will reach the CCCM Cluster for quick intervention
   - The fire incident data shall be reported by the CCCM partner managing the site to the ActivityInfo platform to ensure its reflection in the CCCM Cluster's report.
   o CCCM Unmanaged sites and out of camps
   - The ExU SFP will share the incident report with the ExU fire incident FP at the Governorate level.
   - The ExU fire incident FP at the Governorate level will then refer the case to the CCCM cluster within 24 hours from the incident time and will follow up

for covering the needs, worth to mention that the CCCM cluster will ensure to reflect the incident in the ActivityInfo platform.

- The fire incident data shall be reported by the CCCM Cluster to the ActivityInfo platform to ensure its reflection in the CCCM Cluster's report.