

# Guidance for the Temporary Occupancy of Damaged Buildings

## Liability Disclaimer

This guidance is intended for basic, household-level visual checks only. It does not constitute structural or safety certification and cannot guarantee a building is safe to enter or occupy. Conditions may change suddenly and without warning.

A full damage assessment by qualified professionals is required to verify structural stability.

**If any sign of serious danger is present, do not enter and seek qualified professional assistance if available.**

This guidance is developed by:



GAZA - September 2025

## A. Before using any house or property

- Ask for permission from the owner**  
Written permission, or a verbal agreement.
- Assess the damage, as best you can**  
Carefully assess the safety of your home.



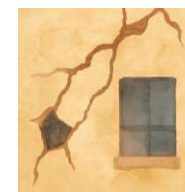
## B. Outside Check

Walk around the building (if possible) and look for major structural issues.

### DO NOT ENTER IF YOU SEE:



Parts of the building collapsed or leaning



Deep cracks in exterior walls



Leaning or bulging walls



Loose & large pieces at risk of falling.

## Burnt buildings are...DANGEROUS...

even if they are still standing.  
Due to: Collapsing debris, hazardous materials, structural damage



**Note:** This tool offers basic guidance only and is not a substitute for expert structural assessment. *(Partners to insert hotline or contact information)*

# Initial Visual Inspection



- x Do not touch unidentified objects, they may be unexploded ordnance, and ensure your family, including children, are warned not to approach or handle them.
- ✓ Contact Civil Defence to inform of the unexploded ordnance.

## C. Inside Check

If the exterior seems sound:



- Enter the building during daylight.
- Wear sensible clothing, or proper protective clothing if available.
- Check stability with your foot before fully standing in a specific area.



- Always enter with someone else  
**!! BUT NOT CHILDREN !!**



- BE CAREFUL** of any exposed electrical cables or damaged appliances.

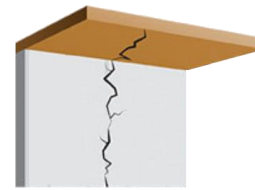
## 1. Check ceiling & beam

Consider the whole building, not just the rooms you want to occupy.

## 2. Inspect walls in each room

especially at corners of doors or windows

Are there STRUCTURAL cracks??



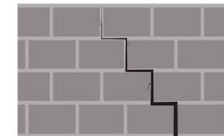
- Wall to ceiling cracks



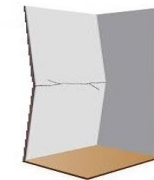
- Diagonal Cracks



- Floor and ceiling cracks



- Stairstep crack in brick or masonry



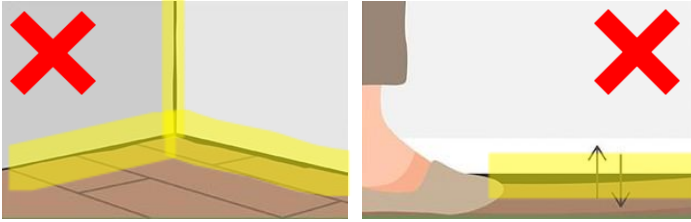
- Bowed wall

Carefully inspect the ceiling, columns, beams, and walls. Do not occupy the space unless you are certain it is structurally safe.

### 3. Check floors & roof

Do the floors feel soft? Or sagging?

- Floor and wall gaps
- Sagging floors



They could collapse or crumble further if stepped on.  
Proceed only if you are confident that it is safe.

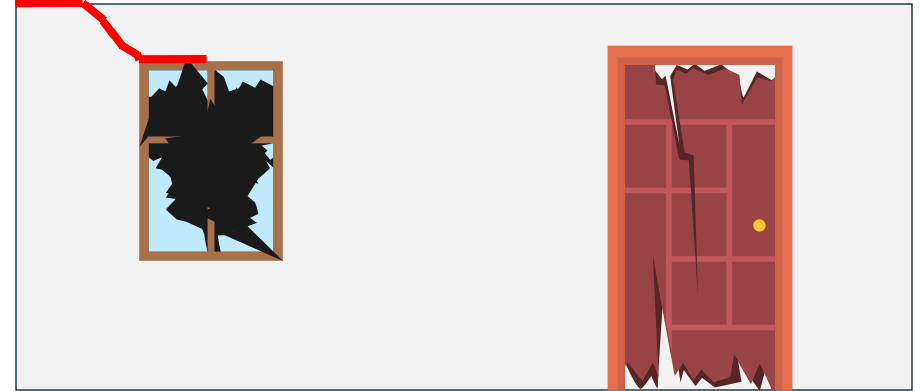
### 4. Check stairs



Clear debris carefully  
as they may pose a  
tripping hazard

- Loose or broken steps.
- Cracks in the stair structure or supports.
- Signs of shifting or tilting.

### 4. Check doors & windows



- Cracked or shattered glass or wood.
- Loose or hanging frames.
- Difficulty opening or closing.
- Sharp edges or debris around openings.
- Signs of structural damage around the window area

Badly fitting doors (e.g. a door that jams or doesn't fit its frame) can be a **sign the building has shifted.**



# Expanded Sealing Off Materials

*These materials are recommended for emergency repairs. Partners are encouraged to modify the quantities below based on the materials and resources available to them.*

## Essential Components

### TIMBER BATTEN 20 pcs

5x2.5cm, useful for creating dividing partitions, fixing tarpaulin and sheet to walls. 2.4m lengths.



### TARPAULINS 3 pcs

woven plastic, available in sizes of 6x4 meters, 5x4 meters, or as a roll of 4 meters width. They can be used for roofing, walls and covering openings/windows



### PLASTIC SHEET 1 roll

0.3mm thick, roll is up to 50sqm per shelter. Minimum width 4m.



### NAILS 50mm 0.5 kg

For timber connections. Used for making frames and fixing cover-battens.



### NAILS 75 mm 0.5 kg

For timber connections. Used for making frames and fixing cover-battens.



### Clout nails 40mm 0.25 kg

For timber connections. Used for making frames and fixing cover-battens.



### HAND SAW 2 pcs

total length 60 cm, for wood, good quality, tempered, hardened and set teeth. Unbreakable handle.



### MEASURING TAPE 1 pcs

3 meters, graduated in centimetres.



### ROPE 1 roll

Minimum 30 meters length, in roll, 6mm thickness.



### HAMMER 1 pcs

Metal or fiberglass handle.



## Optional Components

### TIMBER SHEET - PLYWOOD OR OSB 32 pcs

Approx. 1 cm thick, used for internal partitions, covering openings etc. 2.4x1.2 m.



### SCALPEL 1 pcs

Precision cutting tool with replaceable blade. Used for fixing tarpaulins.



### METAL FIXING BAND 1 pcs

10m roll, 20mm width x 0.9 thick. Useful general purpose fixing band.



## Sealing off openings



Wear gloves & carefully remove shattered glass



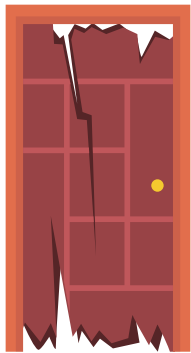
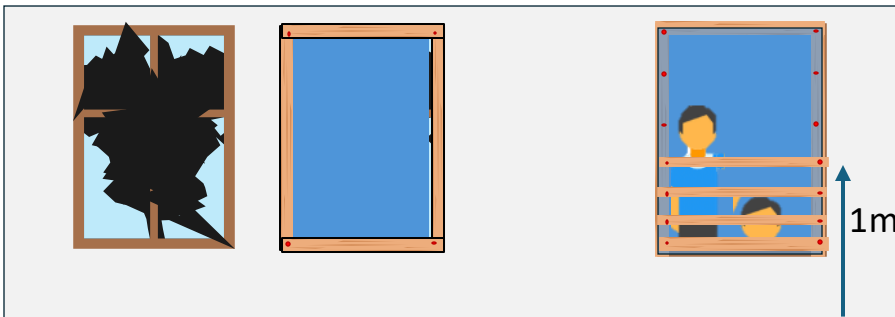
Keep children away from insecure windows

### ❑ Secure tarpaulin

Use timber & nails or ropes to tightly cover the opening.

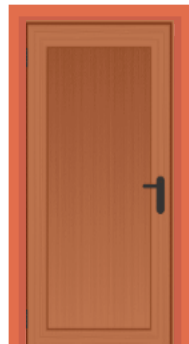
### ❑ Add barrier

Install a railing to prevent accidents



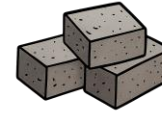
### ❑ Reuse old doors

Adjust them to fit the size of the openings



## Sealing off large gaps or collapsed areas

### ❑ Rebuild with:



✓ Salvaged blocks

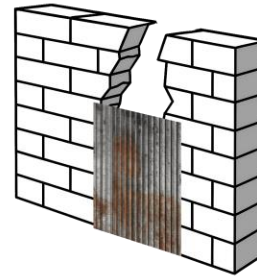


✓ Cement & sand

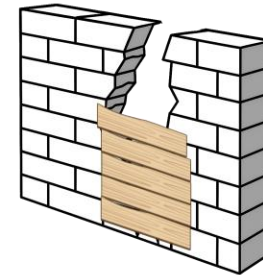


✓ Mud & straw

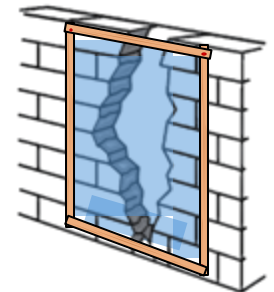
### ❑ If blocks are unavailable, use:



✓ CGI sheets



✓ Wooden boards



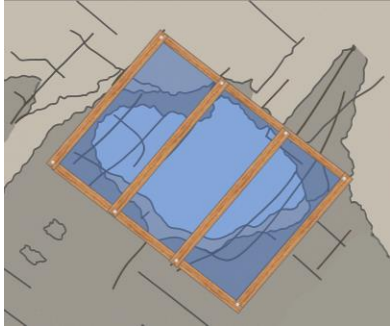
✓ Tightly secure fabric/tarpaulin

## Sealing-off internal walls



❑ Use fabric, tarps, old doors, or wood to create privacy in damaged spaces.

## Sealing off roofs

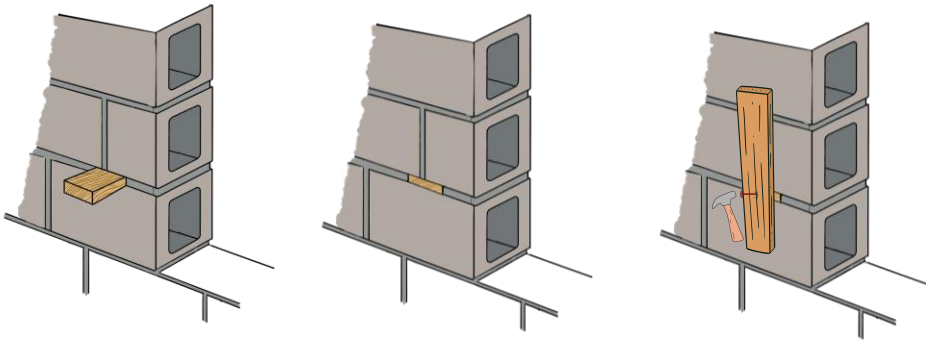


- ❑ Cover holes with **metal sheets** or **tarpaulin**.
- ❑ For large gaps, use **wooden beams** and secure tarps with **rope** or **wire**.

Tarps provide **shade**, **rain protection**, and **privacy**.

## How to fix timber to blockwork?

If it is difficult to get a good fixing to blockwork, try using a **wooden wedge**.

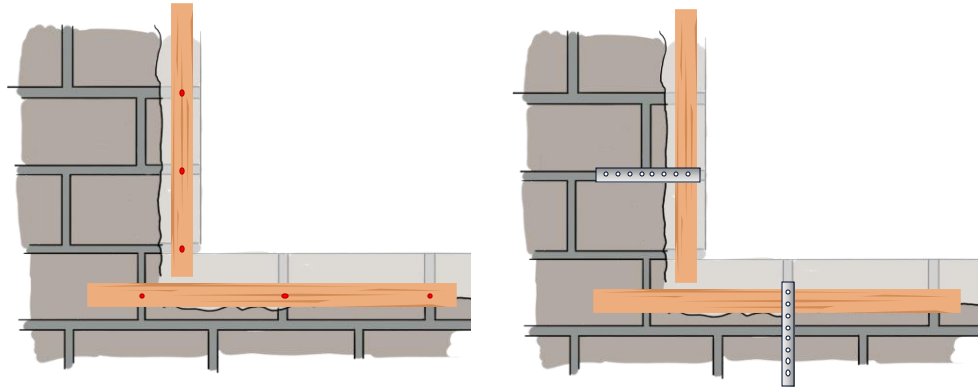


1. Hammer the wedge into a joint in the blocks

2. Cut it off flush

3. Nail the batten to the wedge

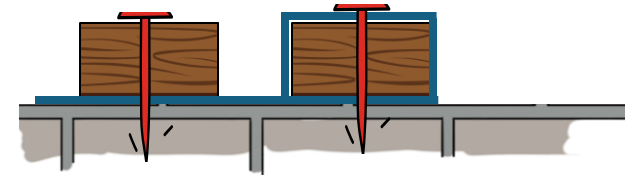
### When fixing a timber batten to blockwork wall:



Try nailing into the mortar joints

Try using metal straps to get a good fixing

### When fixing a tarpaulin to blockwork wall:



Use a timber batten

Wrap around a timber batten

This method can be also applied with **clout nails** or **scalpel**

# Safe handling of Asbestos

Content adapted from



## Recognising Asbestos



In **Gaza**, the most common asbestos is found in **roofing sheets**, mainly in refugee camps.

- ❑ **Corrugated cement-like panels with a wavy, corrugated profile**
- ❑ **Cloudy grey**, sometimes with rough, grainy, or speckled patches caused by aging cement and exposed fibers.

## Health Risks

When asbestos-containing materials are disturbed, tiny fibres are released into the air.

**If inhaled → Serious health issues** such as cancer.



Asbestos should preferably be handled by experts due to associated health risks.

## How to remove asbestos panels?



**Protect your mouth and nose with a mask** using a t-shirt or fabric across your mouth and nose.



**Do not break it up into pieces. Avoid creating dust .**



**Put it in a plastic bag** –and then put that plastic bag inside another plastic bag (double bagging). Seal with some tape if you have it.

**When finished dispose the mask in the 2<sup>nd</sup> bag.**

## Disposal of Asbestos

Put the asbestos bags to one side and give to your waste collection vehicle.

# COOKING AND LIGHTING – FIRE PREVENTION AND HEALTH RISKS

It's best to cook in **outdoor areas**, away from any flammable materials, to reduce the risk of fire.



If it's not possible and you have to cook inside the same area you're occupying, make sure to:

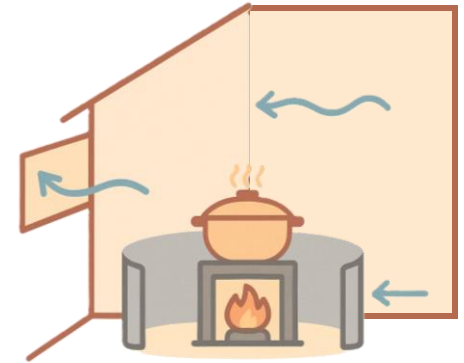


- ❑ Avoid an open flame



- ❑ Keep the flame enclosed in a stove or metal cage
- ❑ Raise the stove using bricks

- ❑ Don't let the stove unattended
- ❑ Use a metal/ clay barrier around the stove if available
- ❑ Keep distance between the walls and the stove
- ❑ Ensure ventilation while cooking



## Keep in mind:



- ✓ Be aware of fire and health risks such as oil or kerosene lamps and candles.



- ✓ If candles are used, try to secure them in a non-combustible holders.



- ✓ Keep the fire away from any flammable materials and children.