

BUILDING A WOOD 6X6 DARKHOUSE, SPEARING SHACK OR ICE SHANTY

Before we start construction of our Darkhouse for spearing, some things need to be shared about the process. Your Darkhouse will be used for many years and will be moved several times each year to different locations on the ice. When building the frame you will see that I have added "braces" at almost every corner for strength and the back and floor of the Darkhouse are built using full 2X4's. These two areas will take the majority of the abuse. The back of the Darkhouse will, if you choose to attach one, support the sled runners ([0294](#), [0355](#)) to assist in easy mobility in moving and loading and the floor which will be walked on and sometimes have to be chiseled out of the ice. The braces will hold the Darkhouse firmly together.

Adding to the strength of the Darkhouse are the fasteners. I recommend using only screws rather than nails for the frame. Screws will not "slip" and will hold fast. The recommended length will be shown in the materials list.

The recommended wood sheeting for the outside of the Darkhouse is Lauan. It is lighter and stronger than chipboard. All recommended materials can be obtained at most lumber companies such as Home Depot or Lowes. After you have cut your pieces of Lauan to size for the exterior sheeting, and prior to attaching the sheeting to the 2"X2" framing, I recommend the use of a good construction adhesive. It comes in a tube and is applied in a line on the 2"X2" exterior frame. This will give the project extra strength needed for years of moving and removal of the ice shanty from place to place. You may choose to paint the exterior, but I sheet the exterior using aluminum sheets obtained from any newspaper printers or print shops. The news print sheets are the size of your daily newspaper and are relatively inexpensive. Printers will usually have larger sheets due to printing larger graphics. What these aluminum sheets are used for is making multiple pages of newsprint or printed graphics such as advertising signs. These aluminum sheets cannot be re-used so are discarded and are usually available upon request for a small fee. Just shop around. One side of the sheet will have the printed graphic or newsprint on it just put that side in or against the Lauan.

The aluminum sheet can be attached using roofing nails or a good hand stapler. I attach the sheets to the 2"X2" frame through the Lauan. When you have an aluminum sheet that ends between the framing you may staple it through the Lauan sheeting, then go inside the Darkhouse and bend over the protruding points to secure them. Or you may use aluminum "rivets" at intervals along the edges of the sheeting instead. However you choose to attach the aluminum sheeting, when finished I put a "dab" of "paintable" latex caulking on each rivet or staple on the interior of the Darkhouse. These will later be painted black with the rest of the interior of the Darkhouse.

6X6 DARKHOUSE MATERIALS LIST

- 5 – 4x8x1/4" plywood (Lauan)
- 1 – 4X8X 1/2" Sheeting Grade Treated Plywood (floor)
- 14 – 2X2's X6'
- 6 – 2X4's X8' Treated
- 3 – 2X4's X6' untreated
- 1 – 2x4's x8' untreated
- 1 – 1"x4"x8" pine board (roof peak)
- 2# 4D Coated Box Nails (to attach Lauan to frame)
- 2#-1" Galvanized Roofing nails (optional)
- 3#-3" Coated Wood Screws
- 1 – Tube (paintable) Caulk
- 1 – Tube Construction Adhesive (put on 2x2's to glue Lauan sheeting to frame, optional)
- 1 Door Hasp
- 3 Door Hinges
- Approx. 30 sheets of Aluminum Printing Plates (optional)

As with any project you will see fit to add some material as you progress, but this will get you started. If Printing Plates are used to cover outside of Darkhouse, one edge of the aluminum plate must be cut off to remove the irregular edge used to attach the sheet to the printing machine. This is a very simple process that can be done with a scissors or sharp knife.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE DARKHOUSE

The 6'x6' floor will be constructed first, using the 2"x4"x6' treated lumber. ([0461](#)) (see plans [1](#), [2](#)) Of the 6'x6' floor plan only 3'x6' will be actual floor. The other 3'x6' will be the open hole to spear through.

Start with the back wall first. This is made of 2"x4" lumber for extra support if you are intending to add sled runners of some kind ([0294](#)). The corners need to be braced using 45 degree angle, scrap 2"x2" pieces and a "slot" cut ([0518](#)) at the top of the corner vertical 2"x4"s to hold the top horizontal 2"x4".

Next, the two sidewalls are erected using 2"x2"s ([0462](#)). The front diagonal wall comes next ([0519](#), [0517](#)). Remember, the horizontal top of the front, diagonal wall (see construction plans), is a 2"x4", laid flat to accommodate all the intersecting 2"x2" pieces ([0516](#), [0510](#), [0512](#)).

Next is the roof. This can be a little tricky, even if you are an experienced builder, due to the angle of the cut. (see plans) But don't fret, you will figure it out. Start with the outside roof angle pieces and "fit" them to see if all your angles match the top of the frame. Just set the top angles on the frame, if they don't match exactly, adjust your angle cut until they do. When they do, remove each separate end and continue the constructing of the roof on the ground. It will be placed on top of the frame when completed ([0511](#), [0516](#), [0519](#)). Now place the roof on the frame walls ([0510](#), [0514](#), [0515](#)) and screw the top to the frame and we have completed the hardest part of the Darkhouse construction ([0513](#)). Remember to put angled 2"x2" supports anywhere you feel they are needed, ([0517](#), [0519](#)) even on the door, using scrap pieces of 2"x2"s.

The rest of the construction using the recommended exterior sheeting and covering will be left up to you. Just look at the photos ([0611](#), [0294](#), [0608](#)). If you have any questions regarding the building process, please contact me using our website.