

Pacific Yurts - Frequently Asked Questions

Yurt Questions

How long does a yurt typically last?

The wood frame of the Pacific Yurt can give you a lifetime of use with minimal but regular maintenance on the exterior parts. We offer several fabrics to choose from for the yurt's outer covers. All of the fabrics used by Pacific Yurts have been carefully chosen for their cleanability, durability and longevity. For instance, our standard side cover is made of an acrylic coated polyester fabric that has proven to be superior to heavier polyester/cotton blend fabrics. Our standard fabric covers average life has been eight to ten years in high UV areas and even longer in less severe climates. Our heavy duty top cover has a 15 year manufacturer's material warranty but may last much longer.

"Your company has always been and continues to be a pleasure to work with. I am amazed at the quality of the product you produce and the efforts you go to satisfy your customers. This has not changed in the 9 years I've been privileged to work with you, which is a wonderful thing to encounter in this day and age. Thank you and best wishes until the next order."

- Kathryn L., Colorado

"Once again we are living through a challenging Minnesota winter in our nearly eleven year old yurt, and doing terrific. Thank you once again for this lovely dwelling. The yurt really needs little of the upkeep that other structures need. Even the huge snowfalls we get just slide off the roof, while our neighbors are shoveling off their roofs."

- Francis F., Minnesota

What kind of security does a yurt offer?

Every Pacific Yurt has a solid door with a high quality residential lockset carrying a lifetime warranty. Our window doors utilize acrylic windows that will not shatter like glass. The yurt also has a continuous lattice wall that spans from one side of the door frame to the other, even through the windows. This means the only way to enter is through the doorway. As with other structures, alarms and motion sensors can be added to the yurt. Most conventional structures can be easily broken into by simply breaking a window, but not a Pacific Yurt.

Who installs the yurt?

The Pacific Yurt is most often installed by the owners themselves, but some prefer to hire a contractor or carpenter to install the yurt. We provide a step-by-step Set Up Manual and provide a toll free number (in the United States only) so we can answer any installation questions. The time spent to install a Pacific Yurt will vary depending on your site, local conditions, number of people and which options the yurt has. Most times a smaller yurt is set up in a few hours, while a large yurt may take a weekend to install. It is best not to set a time limit for yourself and just follow the set up instructions provided.

"I'm a computer guy with little or no construction experience or talent. Assembly was straightforward and the manual was clear and concise."

- Kevin H., Michigan

"Installing it was really fun. As women, we were really pleased with the directions; their simplicity, completeness and clarity. They were the best directions I've ever seen."

- Roberta N., Colorado

Utilities/Heating

Important Note: The installation of all utilities or heaters should meet the manufacturer's installation standards and any applicable building code requirements.

What is the best way to cool the yurt?

There are a variety of ways to cool the yurt. In hot unshaded areas it is important to install our reflective insulation to reduce heat gain through the fabric covers and use our tinted dome skylight. The operable dome skylight (available in clear or tinted) and windows allow fresh air to be pulled into the yurt to aid in natural convection cooling. A ceiling fan can also be installed to increase airflow and circulation. In addition, operable vents can be installed into the floor of the yurt to take advantage of cool air under the deck platform. Conditioning the air inside the yurt can be accomplished through ducting under the floor or by ordering an extra door frame for the yurt and framing in an evaporative cooler or air conditioner into the doorway. People in tropical areas who need maximum airflow may want to consider our tropical cupola option. Pacific Yurts also offers screen doors and screen curtains, allowing doors to be left open for additional ventilation without insect worries. If the heat reducing effects of the tinted dome are desirable in summer, but you were hoping to get as much passive solar heat as possible in the winter, our center ring insert is available with shade screen and can be removed seasonally. For more information contact our customer representatives.

"...the yurt was shelter from the desert sunstorm as well. During the day I'd open the door, windows and dome and it was cool and shady inside. I thank you for your time and your product, and look forward to keeping in contact as a very happy and satisfied customer."

- Diane K., California

How do I heat the yurt?

Most conventional methods of heating will work in a Pacific Yurt. Our customers have used wood stoves, pellet stoves, propane stoves, central heating, electric heaters and even radiant floor heating. If using central heating or a heat pump, ductwork can be installed under the floor of the yurt. When using a vented stove we recommend venting it through the sidewall of the yurt rather than going through the roof. There are many benefits to venting through the wall, which include easy access to the chimney for regular cleaning, having the chimney away from the yurt's vinyl top cover (to minimize the soot that falls onto the roof) and keeping an open floor plan. (You can plan the interior space how you wish and not have to plan around the stove location.) Every Pacific Yurt comes with instructions on how to vent the stove.

It is important to size your heat source according to the size of the yurt as well as your climate. It is a good idea to install our reflective insulation in cold climates in order to retain the heat. Customers with numerous windows in cold areas can increase heat retention by utilizing our insulated window covers. Other items that can add to your cold-weather comfort are a ceiling fan (to circulate the heat inside) and a well insulated platform (floor) complete with skirting. Contact Pacific Yurts customer representatives for more information on how to prepare your yurt and platform for cold climates.

Insulation Liners

If it's good enough for astronauts in space, you'd better believe it will help keep you warm here on Earth. Our seven-layer reflective insulation was developed by NASA. We cover it with an ivory colored fabric for an attractive interior finish. An ideal vapor barrier, it works by reflecting radiant heat in both directions, keeping the yurt warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. It is custom designed to match your window and door placement.

"We have had -15 degrees here in Vermont for about five nights in a row and we have been very warm and the pipes have not frozen. Thanks so much for your wonderful input on how to prepare our home."

- Angela M., Vermont

"We have had high winds, two feet of snow and many days of sub-freezing weather. The yurt took it all in stride and we always felt safe. Your product is everything you promised and I really appreciate the personal service we got. Thanks for the great experience."

- Scott A., Washington

Can plumbing be added?

Plumbing can easily be brought up through the floor of the yurt. If you wish to add interior partition walls the plumbing can be installed into these walls after being brought through the floor. If your site has plumbing and septic hookups you can use standard fixtures, but in remote areas people often use composting toilets and alternative gray water systems. Consult with a local plumber for more information.

Can electricity be installed?

Electrical wiring in a yurt is typically done through the deck platform (floor). Outlets can be flush mounted in the floor of the yurt or on short support posts around the perimeter of the wall (or mounted onto the Snow & Wind Kit supports). If interior partition

walls are added to the yurt electrical wiring can easily be run into these walls, where outlets and switches can be mounted. We recommend having a local professional install the electrical wiring. If electrical service is not available at your site you might consider photovoltaic (solar) systems or propane systems (lights, refrigeration, heating, cook stoves, etc.). For more information contact our customer representatives.

How do I add lighting?

Virtually any type of lighting can be used in a Pacific Yurt. Customers have installed track lighting on the rafters, installed overhead lights to the center ring, used floor or table lamps and propane lights, among other things. Many prefer the safety of using low voltage lighting in their yurts. A very versatile low voltage lighting system is also available from Pacific Yurts. For more information contact our customer representatives.

Alternative Energy Options

There are many great alternative energy products available to consumers today. These products include composting toilets, solar power, wind generators, propane refrigerators & hot water heaters, and hydroelectric systems. There are many good suppliers and manufacturers of these alternative products. We can refer you to some of these companies upon request.

Platform/Deck

What is the floor of the Yurt?

The Pacific Yurt should be firmly attached to a circular platform that is the same size as the yurt and at least 5" above any surrounding decking (or the ground). Having the platform elevated at least 18"-24" can provide a crawl space for accessing plumbing, wiring or storage. Since every site is different, and the circular platform is basic deck construction, we recommend buying local materials and having a carpenter or contractor build the platform on site according to local site conditions and code requirements. Pacific Yurts provides a suggested framing plan and a basic materials list as a guideline for the platform at no charge. If you wish to build a platform using Structural Insulated Panels, which require fewer footings and joists, we can refer you directly to the manufacturer of the panels. For more information contact our customer representatives.

Can I add exterior decking?

Any exterior decking should be at least 5" below the interior floor of the yurt. This allows the yurt's side cover to hang below floor level and secure to the circular platform. This attachment firmly secures the side cover to the platform and provides a weather tight seal. Some customers choose to build a large exterior deck, then build the raised circular platform for the yurt on top of it. This approach tends to be more expensive than simply building an exterior deck outside the entry area only. For more information contact our customer representatives.

Do you know of any contractors in my area?

Pacific Yurts has compiled a list of contractors that our customers have recommended. Contact us to see if one of the contractors is in your area. Pacific Yurts is not affiliated with any of the contractors and it is up to the customer to check their references and pricing.

Interior Design

Important Note: We recommend you enlist the help of a licensed building professional for assistance with your project.

Can interior partition walls be added?

Interior partition walls can be added to provide separate bathrooms, bedrooms or kitchen areas. A local carpenter or contractor can easily build these walls into the yurt after it has been erected. The partition walls should be freestanding and not rely on the yurt, but can be connected to the lattice wall or Snow & Wind Kit's vertical supports. Nothing should be connected to the roof

rafters of the yurt, but the interior walls should definitely be anchored to the floor. Our customer representatives can provide more information about partitioning a Pacific Yurt.

How do I add a bathroom?

Many people with larger yurts choose to frame out an interior bathroom rather than attaching an exterior bathhouse. This could be done (after the yurt is installed) in much the same manner as in a conventional site-built structure and is typically done by a local carpenter or contractor. The plumbing would be brought up through the floor of the yurt into the bathroom. Venting from the bathroom can be accomplished with downdraft vents through the floor or through the wall of the yurt using a flashing kit. Proper ventilation will reduce moisture inside the yurt and prevent condensation. For more information contact our customer representatives.

"I will be sending you some cool photos of my 20' yurt complete with post and beam loft and composting toilet. It is the best thing I've ever invested in and may be buying a 30' next year."

- Randy R., New Hampshire

Can I add a kitchen?

Kitchens have been added to yurts in a variety of fashions, usually with standard cabinets and counters purchased from a local home improvement store or cabinet shop. If you wish to have a custom curved counter along the wall of the yurt, you can usually utilize smaller standard cabinets set at slight angles. This way the only "custom" part would be the countertop itself. Customers who have framed a bathroom into the yurt will often put the kitchen against one of these interior walls so the plumbing can be installed into the partition wall and shared between the kitchen and bathroom. For more information contact our customer representatives.

Can my yurt have a loft?

Lofts can be a great addition to your yurt. Over the years we have had customers build lofts of all different shapes, sizes and heights in their yurts. Lofts should be freestanding structures built into the yurt after it is erected and not attached to the roof rafters of the yurt. They can create private space below for a bathroom or bedroom or simply be left open. If you do not have carpentry skills, we recommend hiring a local carpenter or contractor to assist you. For ideas and more information contact our customer representatives.

Connecting Yurts

Can yurts be connected?

People who have multiple yurts often wish to connect them together or to an existing building. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this. This can be accomplished by using hallways, breezeways or a direct connection. Door awnings are available in a variety of sizes and can be attached between yurts and framed out to create a breezeway. Simple stud walls or plywood panels can be secured to the exterior of the door frames to enclose the breezeway creating a hallway between the yurts. The yurts can also be set adjacent to each other and connected without the hallway. This could be done by securing the two door frames together with short sections of plywood and connecting the top covers together with additional fabric. For more information contact our customer representatives.

Shipping

Shipping costs will vary depending on the destination, size of the yurt and which options it has. Pacific Yurts can obtain shipping estimates to a particular location, but you should know what size yurt and which options you are considering in order to get an accurate estimate.

How do I unload the crates?

Pacific Yurts can acquire freight estimates from shipping companies that offer substantial discounts to our customers (in most cases) and use the company offering the best price. After the yurt leaves our facility the customer is responsible for arranging the

delivery with the freight company. At the time of delivery, you will need help unloading the yurt; a minimum of two to three people for the smaller sizes and three to four people for the larger sizes. This includes a large skeleton crate that is too heavy to lift off the truck, but if you have a crowbar or something similar you can disassemble the crate and carry the contents off the truck. If you are not able to have the desired amount of people handy, you can check with the freight company to see if they have a truck available with a lift gate. Not every terminal has this service and there is usually an additional charge. Freight companies also charge more to deliver to a residence. This charge varies depending on your area. If you are interested in cutting cost you can always consider having it delivered to a business or arrange to pick it up at the nearest terminal.

If you need to have the shipment delivered on a specific day, it is a good idea to be in contact with the freight company when the shipment leaves our facility. Pacific Yurts' shipping clerk will call you with a tracking number a day or so after the shipment leaves our facility. When making a residential delivery the freight company needs to make an appointment. This may take an extra day due to trying to connect with the customer. In some areas the delivering carrier only delivers once or twice a week. If your site is not semi-truck accessible, you may have to pick up at the terminal or meet the freight carrier at a different location. For more information contact our shipping clerk.

Building Codes

How do yurts fit into building codes?

Pacific Yurts are very versatile structures that can be used for many different things. Variables such as the size and use of the yurt as well as the site can help determine if the yurt will require a permit and what type of permit may be needed. In some cases the yurt has been considered a temporary structure, while in others it has been considered a permanent or semi-permanent structure. The yurt is often classified as an auxiliary building, studio or recreational structure, not as a single-family dwelling. For specific information on building codes in your area you may want to contact your local building official. Structural engineering has been performed on the prototype Pacific Yurt (to determine their design snow and wind load capacities based on Uniform Building Code structural standards) and is available for assistance in permitting at your specific site if needed. Several structural engineers around the U.S. have experience preparing calculation and drawing packages for permit. Pacific Yurts is not affiliated with these engineers, but can provide contact information if you wish to retain an engineer for your installation.

"I was most impressed with the strength and snow load capacity of the yurt which along with its spacious and aesthetically pleasing interior provided ample warmth, comfort and all around enjoyment to our back country ski experience."

- Tom S., Colorado

"The engineering, the quality of materials and the strength is superior."

- Josephine P., Washington

Care and Maintenance

How do I care for my yurt once it has been installed?

As with any quality product, there are care and maintenance recommendations that should be observed to get the longest possible functional life from your fabric covers.

An accumulation of dirt or soiling can create an ideal environment for bacteria to grow and cause staining of the fabric. It is important that this be removed regularly to maintain appearance and longevity of the fabric.

Vinyl Covers

The vinyl covers should be cleaned twice a year, or as needed, with a mild soap (Ivory soap) and warm water. We have found this to be the least aggressive to the fabric. Recommendations for cleaning would include hand scrubbing with a soft bristle brush using a ladder around the lower perimeter areas and using the dome opening for access to the top areas. A swimming pool brush with an extension handle and hose attachment would be a good investment for this purpose. Be sure to protect the top cover before sliding the dome down to remove it. In areas where tree sap and leaves are a problem, it may be necessary to clean the top every few months. If mildew is ever found growing on the roof, it should be removed with soap and water. In the event the roof ever becomes torn, it can be repaired with a standard vinyl patch kit available from Pacific Yurts. Always be sure the covers are completely dry before storing them.

100% Polyester Side Cover

This material is also relatively maintenance free and is superior to cotton and polyester/cotton fabrics in durability and cleanability. It should be kept clean (see cleaning recommendations for vinyl covers), never stored wet, and kept free of mildew much the same as the vinyl covers. The side cover may be treated with an appropriate clear water repellent if needed. This may be available through your local canvas or awning dealer, or may be purchased from Pacific Yurts. Side cover should be clean and dry before applying water repellent. Seam sealer is also available.

Wood Stove

A stove adds a comforting dimension to the yurt space, but along with it, the danger of fire. We recommend you do the following. Safety is the best fire insurance.

Clean stove pipe at regular, monthly intervals.

Keep stove 3' - 4' away from any combustible surface.

Our standard flashing is designed to receive 6" (inside diameter) Metalbestos (or equivalent) insulated pipe rated to be two inches from a combustible surface.

Invest in a small fire extinguisher. Fire is always a danger when wood stoves are used.

Seek advice from your wood stove dealer or building code official if you have any questions or give us a call.

Vinyl Windows

Always roll the vinyl windows, as folding them makes creases that impair vision and weaken the material. Rolling them with a clean cotton towel reduces the possibility of scratches. Clean the windows with soapy water and a soft cloth. The windows can be polished using Novus plastic polish or equivalent and a non-abrasive cloth. The surface of vinyl windows are easily scratched, so hose off dirt before cleaning. Never use paper towels or newspaper when cleaning the windows. When the vinyl windows are removed, do not stack them and leave them in the sun. Note: UV web frames are available from Pacific Yurts if you are in a high UV area and wish to protect the Velcro on your side cover while the vinyl windows are off.

Door and Door Frame

All exterior wood should be re-coated with transparent cedar or solid body stain (or equivalent) every year or two. Sand lightly before applying. Unlike varnishes, this finish requires minimal maintenance to keep it looking good.

Lubricate door knob on a regular basis with a graphite or Teflon based lubricant. Be sure to save the warranty card for the door knob. The knob has a lifetime warranty and the card has a phone number to call if you need warranty service.

Dome Skylight and Door Window

Wash acrylic dome and door window with a mild soap (dish washing liquid) and plenty of lukewarm water. Rinse with clear water. Use a soft cloth, never paper towels or other paper products which tend to scratch the surface finish.

To remove grease, oil or tar, use a good grade of hexane or kerosene. Immediately wash away oily film residues with a mild soap and water solution.

Do not use window cleaning sprays or solvents. Alcohol may cause crazing (many small cracks).