



Bat Hospital Bed

Why build this unit?

Historically we housed intensive care bats in a pet unit with towels draped all around it. You could never find the bat without looking through the whole unit, potentially exposing your hands and arms to direct contact with the wee one, having a flighted bat escape, and not readily being able to monitor its food intake and output! The following unit is for bats in intensive care or requiring daily medical attention.

Materials to construct the unit designed to safely house small insectivorous bats include...

Wine box wood, untreated wood or animal safe plywood

Piano hinges or multiple smaller hinge units

Drill

Nails

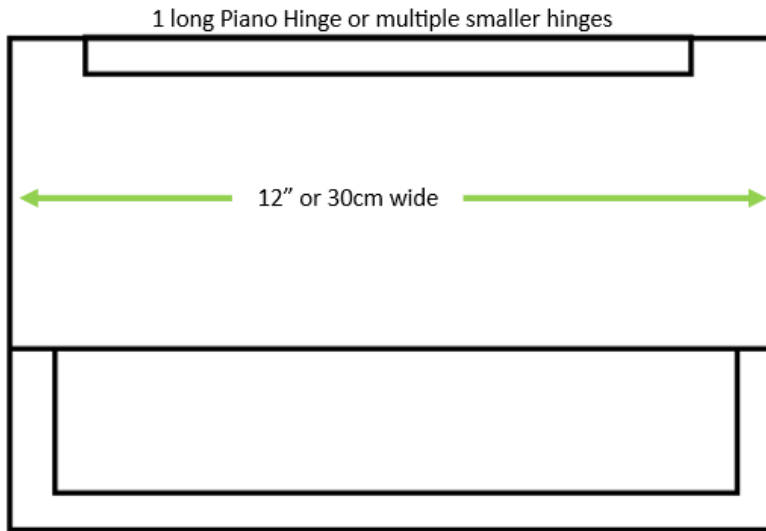
Cotton string or equivalent



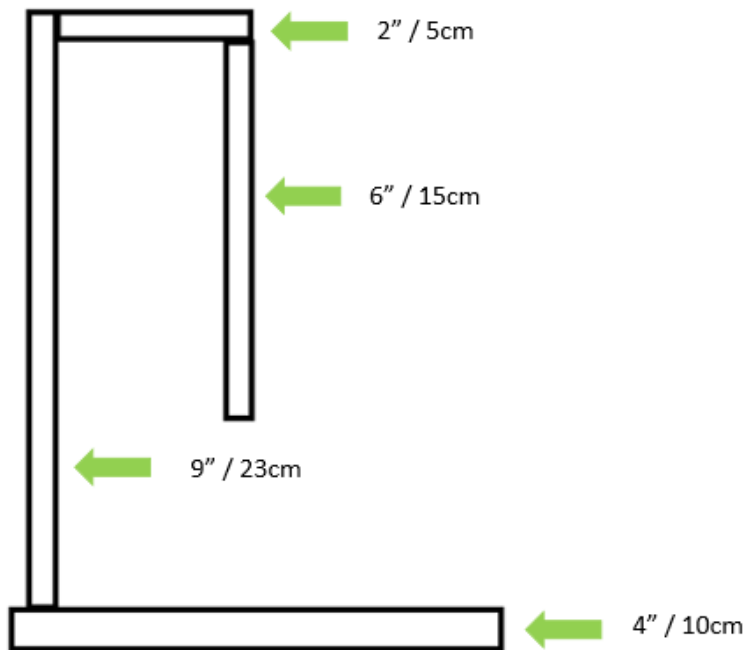
This is an early prototype hospital unit.

When constructing the unit, base your measurements on the housing you have available. These measurements are approximate but will give you an idea of sizing options.

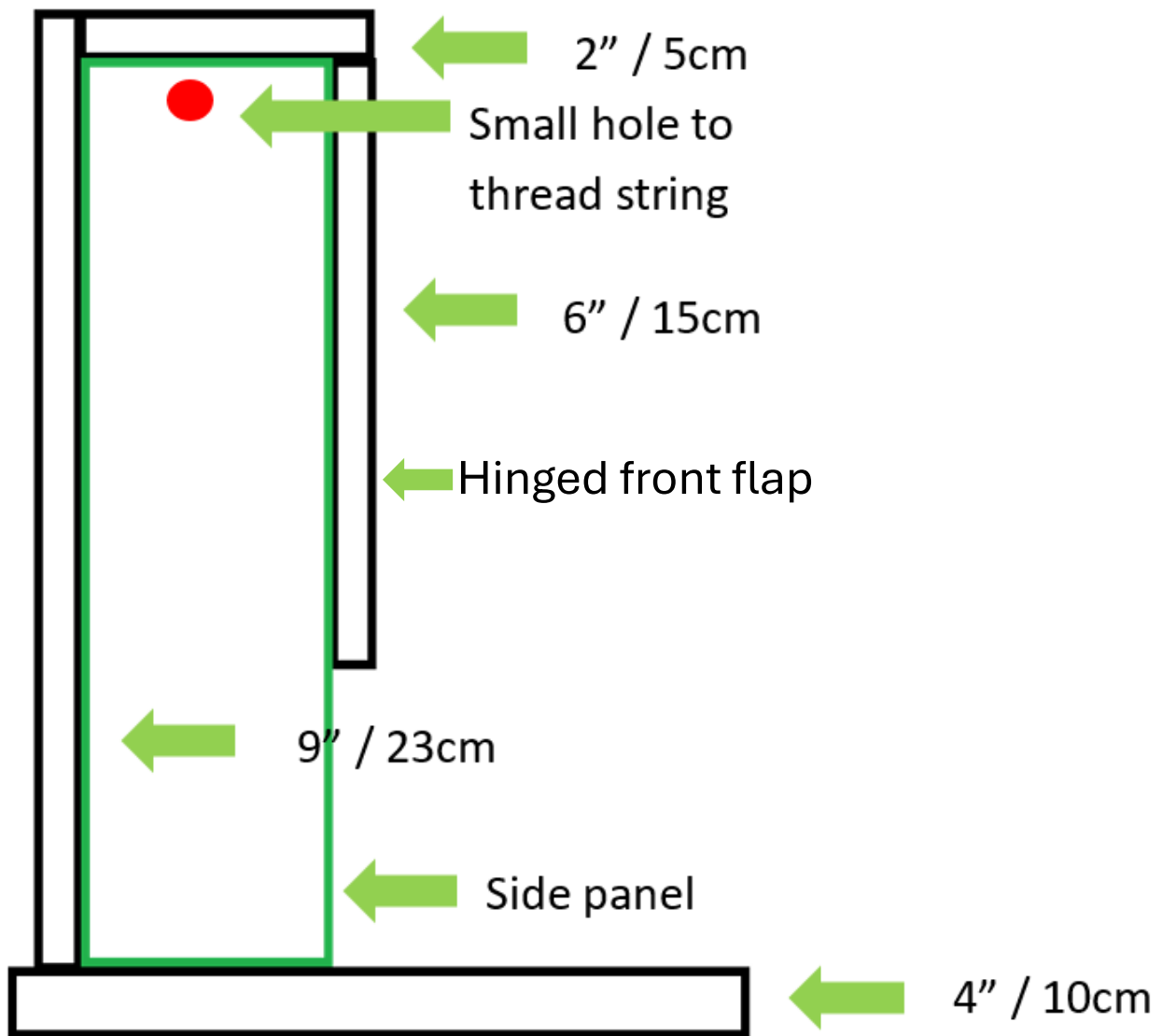
Front view



Side view – middle slice



Side view – end on



The hole at the top of the housing unit is to help anchor a string strung side to side. This allows a fresh cloth to be draped over it on the inside and offer a comfy safe substrate for the bat to snuggle into. So, pass the string through the holes and staple or anchor the ends to the outside of the unit firmly.

Ventilation is also very important. Drill small holes around the top of the unit to allow for air flow.

Housing unit

The best option is one that is escape-proof for a bat! Also, it needs to have good ventilation and be easy to clean. Options include the following commercially available units sold under the description of a small animal keeper, plastic critter tank, critter habitat, or turtle tank, etc. depending on your location.

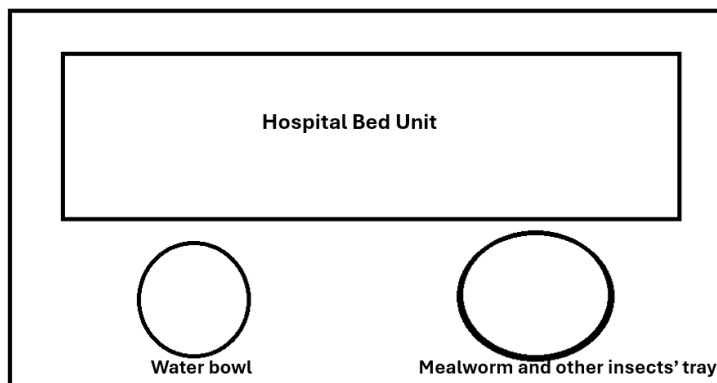


Suggested dimensions

	Housing unit		Hospital bed	
	Inches	Centimeters	Inches	Centimeters
Height	9.7	24.8	9	23
Width	14.5	36.8	12	30
Depth	8.7	22.2	4	10

Layout/floor plan for housing your bat patients

Plastic housing for bat



By placing the feeding bowls away from the 'drop zone' for urine and feces, you reduce contamination issues. You can also rapidly assess your bats' progress from the feces at the bottom of the hospital box and self-feeding from reduced mealworm numbers. Paper towels make a great substrate

under and the bottom of the Hospital Bed unit. Note, if not eating and it is well hydrated, you will need to actively teach the bat that mealworms are yummy, and feed the bat to help restore its condition or maintain its bodyweight. See the SOP 'Teaching your bat that mealworms are yummy!'

Note: The only way to assess body condition and changes is by weighing your bat daily. Chart the weight and ensure it is a part of your planning for that bats care over the next 24 hours.

Bedding for roost – safety and comfort

The material should not be looped or have a loose weave to prevent nails and toes snagging. Blue or green surgical towels work well.



Managing your patient in its dedicated hospital bed

Each day, cleaning is a snap! Simply lift out of the box where your bat is safely roosting as you take food, feces and other observations of the base of the unit. Change out the water and food bowls, wash the housing as needed and replace the flooring with fresh paper towels or other non-slip (and easy to clean) materials.

Finding your bat is also a snap! Simply lift the flap and carefully lift the bedding to locate your patient.

Critical Note: Ensure you are using all appropriate PPE and all windows and doors are closed. No unvaccinated personal should be present until the bat is securely held by a Rabies-vaccinated handler.