

COMMUNITY CAT CAREGIVER GUIDELINES

BASED ON GUIDELINES PROVIDED BY

ALLEY CAT ALLIES

- 1) Conducting ongoing Trap-Neuter-Return.
 - Neuter, vaccinate, ear tip, and return all feral cats to their original location.
 - Create a plan for potential adoption of socialized cats.
- 2) Food and water - Provide for the cats on a regular basis.
 - Remove uneaten food within 30 minutes. Don't allow it to sit out, as it attracts insects & wildlife.
 - Keep the feeding location neat and clean, for the health of the cats and for community relations. Keep the food dishes in one place to facilitate cleanup and to provide a tidy appearance. * Though it is not a requirement, building a feeding station can help camouflage where the cats eat and make colony management easier on the caregiver. The goal is for this area to not be visible to the public. Feeding stations help deter insects from the food by raising it off of the ground; having a roof protects the food from the elements. It also helps with Trap-Neuter-Return efforts, since cats are fed at the same place every day making it easy to know where to trap. Also, you can gradually and easily move the feeding stations when needed to address neighborhood concerns. Feeding cats at a regular time and place ensures that the cats know when and where to go to be fed.
 - Outdoor cats need clean water daily. If you notice that the cats are not drinking the water, try moving it a short distance away from their food. Cats sometimes prefer this arrangement.
 - A cluttered area with debris will call undue attention. Remove empty food containers daily to keep the feeding station sanitary and unobtrusive. This helps avoid possible health code violations and maintain positive relations with the local residents.
- 3) Providing shelter.
 - Some cats find shelter in a building or in the environment.
 - If building a shelter - camouflage as much as possible using dark green or brown paint to match the surrounding foliage. Anything that stands out could bring unwanted attention to the cats. Moving shelters into wooded areas away from buildings, parking lots, and other high-traffic areas is also a good idea for cat safety / avoid neighbor complaints.
 - Straw bedding resists the wet and keeps a shelter warm, and is the best choice for insulation and bedding. Be sure to use straw—not hay—for cat shelters. Do NOT use blankets, carpeting, fake sheepskin, or any material that holds moisture
- 4) Monitoring cats and providing ongoing health care.
 - Health: Keep an eye on the cats for general good health. Common indicators of health problems or injury include: changes in behavior, changes in eating habits, dull eyes or coat, discharge from the nose or eyes, weight loss, fur loss, changes in their gait, and listlessness.
 - Have a plan with a veterinarian for how to handle health problems and for ongoing colony care.
 - Flea Control: Change the bedding in shelters at least twice a year. At that time, spray or dust the floor with a cat-safe flea control product. Fleas are a natural part of life outdoors, so while you can try your best to control them, they are not something to be worried about excessively.
 - Record Keeping: Hold on to all medical records for each cat. A medical record should contain a listing of each vaccination (especially rabies) and any other medical procedures.
- 5) Plan for substitute colony care - Who will care for your cats when you cannot?
 - Don't wait until you are not able to take care of your colony to find a replacement caregiver. If nobody else knows your colony's location or size, don't wait another day to find a substitute caregiver.



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