



Spay/Neuter Clinic
12 Airport Blvd., San Mateo, CA 94401
650/340-7025

TRAPPING INSTRUCTIONS FOR FERAL CATS

The following instructions will assist you with the safe and humane capture of feral cats.

Advance preparation

Careful planning is essential. Feral cats should be trapped the evening before or morning of their spay or neuter surgery. Participants will need to “house” the cat before surgery, transport the cat to our clinic, and house and observe the cat during the recovery period of two-four days.

Participants must also make a plan for release/placement. If the cat appears semi-tame and ready for socialization, foster home placement should be sought. We recommend that a cat of any age be evaluated over time to determine how amenable to socialization he/she may be. Evaluation can be done during the recuperative period following surgery. Some adults who may initially appear to be feral will calm down after a few days and show signs of potential for socialization. While exceptions to the rule exist, most feral cats over the age of three or four months are difficult, but not impossible to socialize successfully. Younger kittens often quickly become socialized with consistent handling. Because of this favorable response, kittens under the age of four months should be fostered rather than re-released.

Before you trap, have a plan of what you will do if you catch any one of them. Since feral cats can usually only be trapped once, do not release the cat from the trap. If you plan to foster the kittens, make sure the foster home is available before you trap. If you plan to have them spayed or neutered have transportation available and have made necessary arrangements for their surgery.

Trapping

For best results, establish a feeding station prior to introducing the trap. The feeding station should be in a stress-free location, suitable for trapping. This area should be sheltered, away from high traffic areas, away from dogs, etc. Place the trap near the feeding station with the door tied open and food inside so the cats will become accustomed to it. Cover the trap with a large towel and tuck the material around the cage so it does not blow in the wind and scare the cats. Place another small towel on the floor of the trap. (Do not use plastic or newspaper because the rattling sound may frighten the cats.) Camouflaging the trap with leaves, brush or a heavy blanket is helpful.

Once the cats are comfortable with the trap, begin the following trapping procedures:

- 1) Limit the food supply for a day before setting the trap to increase the likelihood that the cat

will be enticed by the food in the trap. If cats will not go into the trap, eliminate the food source for the meal before trapping. Always provide plenty of clean water.

- 2) Set the trap during daylight hours to avoid trapping wildlife. (You are responsible for releasing any wildlife that may become trapped. It is illegal to relocate wildlife so the animal must be released on the site where trapped. If you inadvertently capture a wild animal or a neighbor's cat, simply release the animal by unlatching the clasp on the sliding door and open the sliding door.)
- 3) Bait the trap with a small amount of food with a strong odor such as tuna or sardines. Place the food at the end of the trap furthest from the entrance.
- 4) Make sure the sliding door on the trap is securely closed and latched. Open the opposite end spring door and place the small hook located on the top right of the trap near the spring door to the holder on the spring door. To test how the trap works simply push down on the trip panel by inserting a straight object such as a pencil or screwdriver through the mesh from the outside of the trap. The door should spring closed. Test the trap and know how to set it up but avoid doing this in view of the cats you are trying to trap.
- 5) A trapped cat may become very agitated and thrash in the trap, and may urinate or defecate involuntarily. Cover the trap with a dark blanket to calm the cat by reducing visual stimuli and move it to a quiet place or transport it for surgery. Do not release the cat.

Because of potential soiling, padding should be placed between the trap and car upholstery while transporting the cat. Do not attempt to transfer a feral cat from the trap to a carrier. All feral cats must arrive at the PHS Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic in a humane trap.

Can't catch a cat?

There is often one stubborn cat in a colony but nearly all cats can be trapped if you are patient and persistent.

You can obtain a voucher for the surgery before the cat is brought for surgery by contacting the San Mateo County Environmental Services Office at 650/ 363-4840. You must present a voucher and a valid drivers license with a current San Mateo County address at the time you drop-off the cat for surgery or you will be charged \$45 per cat.

Please review the Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Clinic policies before bringing feral cats for alteration.