

# CAN DO AND CANNOT DO WITH COMMUNITY CATS



There are 6 possible paths in dealing with community cats:

1. Do nothing
2. Humanely trap the cat and bring it to the shelter
3. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)
4. Deter the cat from their property
5. If the cat is friendly, rehome it (please have it scanned for a chip and surgically altered and vaccinated first!)
6. Relocate the cat, if they can find an appropriate home and relocate it properly (please have the cat surgically altered, vaccinated and ear tipped first!)

Things that they cannot do:

1. Dump the cat somewhere, this is abandonment and is against the law.
2. Intentionally cause harm to the cat, this is animal cruelty and is against the law.

LISTEN to their issue!

- It is likely a valid one: feces, marking, too many cats, cats dying, etc.
- Often, people just need to vent and to be heard.
- Help them find solutions and empower them to address their problem.
- Sometimes, people want someone else to resolve the problem for them.
  - Provide at least one alternative way to deal with their issue. What tools or knowledge do you have to offer them?
  - If that solution(s) is unsatisfactory to them, refer them to someone more experienced in discussing their issue. That person will probably say all of the same things, but sometimes hearing the information from someone else will be enough to change their thought process.
  - And sometimes people are just unhappy. You could ask, "What do you want from me?" forcing them to stop and think about what they really want.

If someone suggests that you kill the cat.

- That has been tried for decades, it does not work.
- You are in the business of saving lives and helping with long term solutions.
- Explain that if the cat(s) are all removed by killing/relocating them, new cats will just move in to replace them because cats are drawn to an area for food and shelter. (This is the vacuum effect)

# NEIGHBORLY WAYS TO MANAGE COMMUNITY CATS

Regardless of how they feel about the cats, they need to remember that they are training the cats to do what they want. They must be patient and diligent in their efforts; some results are immediate while others may take weeks. They should work with their neighbors to find solutions that work for everyone.

Those not wanting the cats around:

1. Borrow or purchase motion-activate deterrents like the ultrasonic CatStop™ or ScareCrow™ water sprinkler (contech-inc.com) or purchase a ScatMat® (petsafe.net).
2. Secure crawl space, garage, fence lines and shed, including enticing space underneath.
3. Tightly close all trash cans and dumpsters.
4. Purchase a car cover.
5. Work together to TNR all the community cats in the neighborhood.
6. To discourage feces and urine:
  - a. scatter citrus rinds, coffee grounds, white vinegar, etc. (these will take multiple applications in order to train the cat)
  - b. submerge chicken wire (roll under sharp edges), carpet runners or Cat Scat™ (gardeners.com)
  - c. cover ground with lattice, river rocks, etc.

Remember, if they are setting traps for cats, they are attracting cats, not deterring cats.

Those wanting the cats around:

1. They are responsible for helping the cats to coexist in the neighborhood. If they follow good caretaker guidelines and get the cats spayed/neutered most complaints will be resolved.
2. If they are going to feed the cats, they need to get the cats spayed/neutered.
3. Provide fresh food AND water daily.
4. Feed in the daytime in a discreet location away from problem areas.
5. Feed at the same spot and time daily. The cats will learn the routine.
6. Feed only enough for the number of cats to finish in one sitting; usually 30 minutes. (½ cup of kibble/cat/day is a good guide) Pickup food dishes with any uneaten food after 30 minutes.
7. Keep the area clean of debris regardless of whether you or the cats created the mess.
8. Establish an outdoor litter box with sand in a wooden box or cement mixing tub. Keep the litter box clean by scooping regularly.
9. Offer to pick up poop in a neighbor's yard if the cats are soiling their yard. 10.If necessary, provide shelter for the cats.