



HOW TO RELOCATE FERAL CATS

Introduction

Feral cats live without direct human contact and usually prefer it that way. They are a very social animal and develop strong bonds with other members of their colony. The cats know where the food, shelter and safety areas are in their colony location. Sometimes, however, it proves to be safer to relocate a feral cat or even the entire colony when all other options are exhausted. Kittens and social cats should be brought into foster homes for adoption.

Relocation Considerations

- Move two or more cats together, whenever possible.
- Some relocated cats may disappear, either being driven off by territorial cats or other animals in the area, or simply because they have an intense natural instinct to return “home.”
- Relocated cats may encounter hazards that they have never encountered before (like coyotes, chemicals, open wells, etc.)

**If you have determined, however, that the cats must be relocated,
please follow the following guidelines to increase the cat(s) chances of survival and of a
successful relocation.**

Preparation for Relocation

1. Location Requirements

- Away from busy roadways
- Options for cats to seek safety and to get out of the weather – the more options the better

2. Care Provider Requirements

- Must be committed to providing lifetime care
 - Quality food
 - Daily fresh and clean water
 - Water and food dishes cleaned and disinfected regularly
 - Safe and weather proof housing and bedding
 - Veterinary care whenever needed

3. Containment Area Requirements

- Identify a room or secure area that is clean, quiet, temperature controlled and protects the cats from the elements as much as possible. Be sure there is adequate air and light available. **NOTE: What you may think is “escape-proof”, does not mean that the cat thinks the same. You would be surprised at how adept they are to finding that one tiny hole through which to escape.** Look closely.
- Make sure that the containment area has or is located close to places where the cats can hide once they are allowed out of the relocation cage confinement.
- Successful confinement periods range from 14 days to 3 weeks to allow them time to identify the location, the resident animals and the care providers.
- Place bedding, food, water and clean litter into the relocation cage before you put the cat into the cage.
- Confinement relocation cage within the containment area:
 - Must keep cat comfortable regardless of weather.
 - Must keep newcomers inside the cage and established resident animals outside the cage.
 - Must include a “hidey hole” to allow the cat to feel safe, such as a carrier with the door off or tied open.
 - Make sure that both the cage and the “hidey hole” are secure so as not to be tipped over.
 - Must be covered at least partially to allow cat additional privacy to further reduce stress.
- Dogs: It is best to introduce the dogs to the new cats slowly. Do not allow the cats to be chased or harassed by the dogs during their confinement period or when they are initially released from the relocation cage. They must have time to discover at least some of the safety areas of their new location.

Cats

1. Trapping

- Follow the recommendations and steps from “How to Trap Feral Cats”

2. Medical

- All medical needs must be completed prior to transportation to a new location.
- This should include spay/neuter, vaccinations including rabies, deworming and identification in the form of a microchip implant.
- If possible, transport after immediate post surgery care, or ensure that post surgery care instructions are followed at the new location.

3. Transportation

- DO NOT transport in a trunk or in a truck bed.
- Keep cats separated.
- If there are two cats who provide each other comfort, ensure that the cage is large enough for them to move around a little.
- Keep covered, ventilated and secure enough to avoid tipping or sliding around.
- Monitor temperature control i.e. cool in summer and warm in winter.
- Provide food and water and litter box if it is a lengthy trip.
- Avoid loud and sudden noises, such as blaring radio.

Relocation

1. Confinement – Relocation Cage

- Be sure to put food, water and litter into cage before putting the cat into the cage.
- Be very careful when releasing the cat into the containment area. (Two pairs of hands are often better than one.) And don't forget to close the doors to the area so that if the cat escapes, it doesn't go too far.
- Cats must receive daily care, food, water and litter box cleaning.
- During the first day or two, the cats will be inspecting the cage inch by inch to find a way out (especially at night).
- They will usually calm down in a day or two after they realize that they will not be harmed and that there is food, comfortable bed and safety from predators.

2. Confinement Tips (to increase the chance for successful relocation)

- Feed on a regular schedule preferably twice a day (wet and dry).
- Keep at least one end of the relocation cage covered to reduce stress.
- Rattle the food in a box or bowl each time you feed so the cats associate the sound with food.
- Talk to the cats frequently. A radio tuned to a talk station is a good idea, but not too loud and not constantly, to let the cats get used to hearing human voices.
- If a cat escapes during the confinement period, make sure food and water is left out and that their used litter (for scent) is put in the area.
- Monitor resident animals and try to ensure the introductions go as smoothly as possible. Ensure that resident animals do not hover over the cage or bother the newcomers excessively.

3. Release Tips

- When the cats are ready for release, just open the cage door and allow them to come out on their own.
- Continue feeding in the same area and on the same schedule as before.
- Typically they will run and hide after initial release, but will stay close by and eventually show themselves.

Conclusion

Though the best option for a feral colony is to remain in their original home with shelter and monitoring from caregivers, relocation can be a safe and viable option if undertaken properly and if these guidelines are strictly followed.

Success depends on the new care provider's commitment to carefully follow the relocation process and to maintain long term care.

As with any program from SCAT Street Cat Rescue, we welcome questions anytime, and are here to provide assistance and guidance with the ultimate goal of bettering the lives of the cats. We encourage you to stay in touch with the SCAT office and tell us how things are going. Photos are always welcome.

SCAT Street Cat Rescue Program Inc.

Registered Charity #BN 884271180RR0001

Mailing Address

P.O. BOX 31041
Saskatoon , SK
S7H 5S8

Adoption Centre on Faithfull

108- 2750 Faithful Avenue (corner of 50th and Faithfull) in Saskatoon

Phone: (306) 955-7228

Fax: (306) 955-1037

Email street.cat@sasktel.net

HOURS OF OPERATION

11 am - 4 pm Wednesday to Friday

1 pm - 5 pm Saturday

Closed Sunday, Monday and Tuesday

Note: other times are also available depending on volunteer availability. Call ahead and see if someone is there, or ask for someone to return your call and make an appointment. We will make sure someone is available to assist you.

Additional Resources for Information about Feral Cats

1. http://video.bestfriends.org/media/g/focus_felines/default.aspx
2. http://www.neighborhoodcats.org/HOW_TO_RELOCATION
3. <http://www.saveacat.org/relocateferals.html>
4. <http://www.alleycat.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=334>