

Forms

Sample City Council Letter

Name of City Council Member
Address

Date

Dear Council Member _____ (insert last name) _____ ,

I am writing this letter to address our town's current homeless cat population and to offer some helpful suggestions to the council in humanely managing the situation. As you are probably aware, there are several methods of controlling cat populations; however, only one method provides not only a humane solution, but also an effective and less costly solution. The method I am referring to is Trap-Neuter-Return or TNR.

The preferred nonlethal method of controlling feral or stray cats is by implementing a Trap-Neuter-Return program. In practicing TNR, cats are caught in humane traps, spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and returned to the site. Kittens/cats who are friendly or can be socialized are placed into an adoption program to find permanent homes. Cat rescue organizations, such as Alley Cat Rescue, have over 40 years of experience working with feral cats, which has taught us that TNR immediately reduces colony sizes, because all kittens and tame cats are removed. Feral cats, who cannot be adopted, are returned to the site, where supervised, long-term care is ensured by dedicated volunteers.

The benefits of TNR are numerous. TNR stabilizes populations at manageable levels, by stopping the reproductive cycle. Over time, the natural cycle of attrition will maintain the stable numbers and any new cats to the colony will be sterilized. Sterilization eliminates common complaints associated with mating behaviors, such as fighting, yowling, and spraying.

TNR is also more effective and less costly than repeated eradication attempts. Complete eradication attempts fail and in some cases are counterproductive because they cause a "vacuum effect." Biologist Roger Tabor explains that removing cats all together will allow for more cats to quickly fill in the vacant space. However, "if a colony is neutered and returned to its area it will continue to hold the location and keep other cats out by its presence." In addition, in numerous cases when feral cats are removed from an area, the rodent populations explode, causing further problems. Lastly, TNR is humane to the animals and fosters compassion within the community.

Also, cats who have been trapped and evaluated by a veterinarian are healthier and are less likely to transmit diseases (to other cats and to humans). Females who have been spayed are less susceptible to uterine, ovarian, or mammary cancer, and males who are neutered are less likely to get testicular tumors or have prostate problems. In addition, cats who are “fixed” tend to be less aggressive (fight less, which decreases disease transmission) and wander less (they will keep other cats from joining the colony and it makes managing them easier). Lastly, a rabies vaccine is administered; which provides a buffer zone between wildlife and humans, and decreases the risk of the public coming in contact with an unvaccinated cat.

The traditional catch-and-kill method has been proven not to work, as I explained above, and another outdated approach to the problem is to pass ordinances prohibiting people from feeding community cats. Such regulations will only heighten the problem rather than help. The logic behind such bans is that if there is no food available, the cats will go away. This is not true. “Starving out” cats will only make the situation worse for the community and for the cats. Plus, it will put those individuals willing to take care of and give homes to community cats under fire, when all they are trying to do is help the animals. Instead of blaming the feeders and criminalizing their actions, we should encourage their acts of compassion by assisting them with the resources and information available to care for and sterilize the animals. After all, it is not their fault the cats are homeless; they are just trying to be upstanding citizens, by taking it upon themselves to help the animals.

Simply prohibiting individuals from feeding community cats will not solve the problem. Where there is a large number of people living (food source), there will be cats. And if individuals continue to not spay/neuter their pets, allowing them to reproduce, there will be more stray/feral animals. Ultimately, we all need to work together, if we are to control the pet overpopulation. The current trend of scapegoating cats is very dangerous, for it fosters cruelty to animals, and the time spent placing blame is only time wasted. Plus, nonlethal methods for controlling their populations exist and should be advocated by all who are trying to instill a more compassionate ethic towards the earth and all its inhabitants.

Should you need further information on TNR and feral cats, please visit Alley Cat Rescue’s website at www.SaveACat.org. ACR has published a feral cat handbook to shed some light on the facts and myths surrounding feral cats; if you should need assistance in your decision-making process and to help you in organizing and managing TNR programs, please let ACR know and they will send you a copy. ACR can be reached at acr@saveacat.org or by calling 301-277-5595. Thank you for your time and compassion for our feline friends!

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Your Name Printed

Your Contact Information

Sample Petition

Support Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Programs for _____ (insert town name) 's Stray and Feral Cats

Target: _____ (insert town council or local government)

Background information:

The preferred nonlethal method of controlling feral or stray cats is to implement a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program. In practicing TNR, cats are caught in humane traps, spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and returned to the site to live out their lives. Kittens/cats who are friendly or can be socialized are placed into an adoption program (coordinated by a rescue organization) to find permanent homes. TNR immediately reduces the size of colonies, because all kittens and tame cats are removed. Cats who are truly feral should be returned to the site, where supervised, long-term care is ensured by dedicated volunteers.

The benefits of TNR are numerous. TNR stabilizes populations at manageable levels, by stopping the reproductive cycle. Over time, the natural cycle of attrition will maintain the stable numbers and any new cats to the colony will be sterilized. At the same time, TNR reduces euthanasia rates at local county shelters, by reducing the number of unwanted kittens being born and freeing up space at the shelters for cats who are relinquished by their owners.

TNR is also more effective and less costly than repeated eradication (catch-and-kill) attempts. Catch-and-kill attempts fail and in some cases are counterproductive because they cause a "vacuum effect." Biologist Roger Tabor explains that removing cats all together will allow for more cats to quickly fill in the vacant space. However, "if a colony is neutered and returned to its area it will continue to hold the location and keep other cats out by its presence." In addition, in numerous cases when feral cats are removed from an area, the rodent populations explode, causing further problems.

Sterilization also eliminates common complaints associated with mating behaviors, such as fighting, yowling, and spraying. TNR is humane to the animals and fosters compassion within the community. Lastly, cats who have been trapped and evaluated by a veterinarian are healthier and are less likely to transmit diseases (to other cats and to humans). A rabies vaccine is administered, which creates a buffer zone between wildlife and humans, and also reduces the risk of the public coming in contact with an unvaccinated cat.

Sample Guidelines for Adopting A Cat or Kitten



Alley Cat Rescue, Inc.

www.saveacat.org (301) 277-5595

Alley Cat Rescue wants our rescued cats placed in homes where they will be treated as a member of the family for the rest of their lives which, with care, can be for 12 years or longer. If you do not agree with our guidelines, we suggest that you reconsider whether or not adopting a cat is right for you. When you adopt a cat from us, you must sign a legal contract stating that you will comply with our requirements, which are to give the cat a long healthy life in a loving home. If you have any questions or concerns in fulfilling these requirements, please discuss them with us prior to signing.

1. **Member of the family.** A cat is not a possession, but a member of your family to be treated with love and respect. She should share the house and not be left outdoors, isolated in a cage, or left in a room separating her from the people in the family.

Reason: A cat who is not an accepted member of the family will not be happy and may become withdrawn or exhibit other behavioral problems.

2. **Neutering and spaying.** Your cat must be neutered (male) or spayed (female) by five months of age. (The cat you adopt from ACR will already be spayed/neutered).

Reason: There are already too many unwanted cats killed in shelters each year. ACR campaigns to put an end to this killing. A female cat can become pregnant as early as five months of age. Spaying and neutering will prevent homeless kittens and will help your cat live a longer, healthier life. Neutered and spayed animals are less prone to cancers. Unneutered males often spray on furniture.

3. **Declawing.** Our cats must not be declawed. If you want a declawed cat, let us know. We sometimes have cats who have already been declawed by their previous guardians before relinquishing them to ACR.

Reason: Cats have a psychological need to claw as part of grooming and stretching. They remove the sheath that grows over their claws. Just as a cat cleans her fur, she also takes care of her claws. Clawing also helps keep her muscle tone. It is cruel and inhumane to remove a cat's claws, which function as part of her fingers and toes. Declawing is like removing the entire first joint of your finger. Many cats do not walk properly after being declawed and some exhibit aversions to litter boxes, because it hurts their feet to dig. Declawed cats often bite more, since they no longer have claws for defense. If you do adopt a declawed cat, she should not go outside without supervision.

Frequent nail clipping can help alleviate scratching problems. Your vet can show you how to do this. You can also help by giving your cat plenty of things to scratch on

and by gently correcting her when she scratches something inappropriate; a spray bottle filled with water works as a good deterrent. A product called Soft Claws is a more humane alternative to declawing. These are vinyl nail covers which are glued on to your cat's natural nails. Soft Claws will cover the nail tips, so that no damage is caused when your cat scratches. They are available at most pet supply stores.

4. **Indoor/Outdoor cats.** You should keep the cat indoors or allow her outside only under supervision. ACR recommends a cat-proof, fenced-in yard if the cat goes outside. (Visit www.CatFence.com for more information.) Cats must be kept inside at night. We also have information available on a variety of outdoor structures so that she can enjoy the outdoors safely. And a harness and leash can be used for outdoor exercise.

Reason: Domestic cats left outdoors without supervision could face dangers and risk being injured, lost, or stolen. It is much safer to only allow your cat outside under supervision.

5. **Medical care.** Your cat will need to visit the veterinarian at least once a year for her annual check-up. Many veterinarians now recommend a three-year vaccination cycle, instead of annual boosters. When ill, a cat needs to be promptly treated by a veterinarian. You are responsible for medical bills, except for the initial set of vaccinations we supply.

Reason: The FVRCP booster prevents your cat from contracting distemper and other ailments. Rabies vaccinations prevent your cat from contracting rabies and may be required by law in your state. Expect your cat to catch an occasional cold, ear infection, respiratory infection, etc., and to develop some ailments as she gets older, so plan your budget accordingly to include these medical conditions.

6. **Children.** If you have a child under six years of age, it is recommended that you adopt a cat or kitten six months of age or older.

Reason: Young kittens have not yet learned to retract their claws and could scratch if handled improperly. The younger a kitten is, the more fragile, and the easier she could be accidentally injured by a small child. No matter how good your young child is with animals, children are often unable to properly carry and handle little kittens. Also, children frequently have high-pitched voices, which can frighten a young cat.

7. **Preferably no single cats.** It is highly recommended that cat, especially a kitten, be placed in a home with another cat or a dog.

Reason: Cats are social creatures and having a single kitten in a house could get very lonely and may exhibit behavior problems. She can also drive you crazy begging for affection when you come home. A young cat needs companionship and someone to play with.

8. **Cats must be permitted where you live.** If you rent your home or apartment, or live in a condominium, you need to be sure that cats are permitted. Your lease or bylaws should specifically state that you are allowed to have cats. Cats are a life-long commitment, so you must always live in situations where cats are permitted.

Reason: Many people get a companion cat and are then told by their landlord or condo association to give up the animal or move out. Rental housing permitting animals can be difficult to find. ACR can assist your efforts to get permission.

9. **Post-adoption.** We reserve the right to investigate the living conditions of your new cat through follow-up telephone calls and/or visits.

Reason: ACR wants our cats placed into loving, caring homes as members of the family. The vast majority of people provide excellent homes for their cats. Occasionally, there will be a personality conflict between a cat and a person. If this occurs and is not resolved in a couple of weeks, it is best to return the cat to us. Follow-up calls and visits help us to ensure that our cats are being treated with the love and respect laid out in our guidelines. ACR wants to help you through your adjustment period with your new companion(s) and we will be happy to answer any questions and address any concerns that you may have.

10. **Relinquishment of your cat.** If you must give up your cat, she *must be returned to Alley Cat Rescue*. You must not turn the cat over to a shelter or another person. If you do relinquish a cat, no questions will be asked. We do not want you to feel guilty.

Reason: ACR will accept your cat at any time if you must give her up. We want to know that our cats are cared for all their lives, so we will take them back and find a new home. Do not, for any reason, leave one of our cats at an animal shelter. They may be killed before we can rescue them.

11. **Literature.** There are several excellent books on cat care and cat behavior. Books and magazines are an excellent resource for answering your questions. ACR suggests these books and magazines. The list also includes books on outdoor, stray, and feral cats.

- *Adopting Cats & Kittens*, by Connie Jankowski
- *The Purina Encyclopedia of Cat Care*, by Amy Shojai
- *Kitten Care & Training*, by Amy Shojai
- *Cats for Dummies*, by Gina Spadafori
- *Understanding Cats; Understanding Cat Behavior*, by Roger Tabor
- *The Cat Behavior Answer Book*, by Arden Moore
- *Cat vs. Cat: Keeping Peace When You have More than One Cat*, by Pam Johnson- Bennett
- *ComPETability: Solving Behavior Problems in Your Multi-Cat Household*, by Amy Shojai
- *The New Natural Cat: The Complete Guide for Finicky Owners*, by Anitra Frazier
- *The Stray Cat Handbook*, by Tamara Kreuz
- *The Wild Life of the Domestic Cat*, by Roger Tabor
- *Maverick Cats: Encounters with Feral Cats*, by Ellen Perry Berkeley
- *The Cat Who Cried for Help*, by Nicholas Dodman
- Magazines: *The Whole Cat Journal*, *Catnip*, and *Cat Watch*

Sample Adoption Contract



Alley Cat Rescue, Inc.

www.saveacat.org (301) 277-5595

Name(s) of Cat(s) being adopted: _____

I, _____, agree to the following:

1. The cat will live in a private residence as a companion animal and will be provided with fresh food and water daily, as well as a clean litter box.
 2. I will never strike or harm the cat in any way.
 3. **I will NOT have the cat declawed. I will NOT allow anyone else to declaw the cat. I understand that doing so may result in legal action being taken against me.**
 4. I agree to provide future vaccinations and veterinary care if the cat becomes ill or injured. I will take the cat to the vet for checkups as recommended by my veterinarian (usually once a year). I will do whatever it takes to keep the cat living a good quality life.
 5. **I will NOT euthanize the cat unless he or she is suffering and no alternative options are available.**
 6. I will never use, sell, give, or transfer the cat for purposes of research/ experimentations, fighting, for consumption, or use in products.
 7. I certify that I am permitted to have a cat in my home or apartment, and everyone living there has agreed to live with the cat. Upon request, I will provide proof to Alley Cat Rescue that I am permitted to have a cat in my house or apartment.
 8. I consent to home inspections by Alley Cat Rescue.
 9. If I cannot keep the cat for any reason, I agree to:
 - a. Return the cat to Alley Cat Rescue (301-277-5595; ACR@saveacat.org),
 - b. Never take the cat to a shelter or animal control facility for any reason,
 - c. Never transfer the cat to another home without consulting Alley Cat Rescue.
- Alley Cat Rescue will ALWAYS take back a cat who was adopted from us.**
10. I certify that I am 18 years or older and of sound mind and understand the ramifications of entering into a binding contract.

_____ Signature	_____ Printed Name	_____ Date
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_____ Date of Birth	_____ License or Social Security No.
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Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Cell: _____

Email Address: _____