

ANNEXURE I
HUMANE CAT TRAPPING PROTOCOL
Using The SPCA Humane Traps



Cat Trapping “how to” Protocol

Using the SPCA humane trap

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1. Introduction

Trapping is very rewarding, especially when you get the target cat or kittens you are after. Patience is very necessary and trapping is not for the impatient types! It is an art and not fun, it must be taken seriously. Trapping can be very time consuming and too tedious for some people as sometimes you need to spend hours sitting quietly, patience is definitely required.

The 7 steps of Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) are:

- Preparation
- Setting the trap
- Checking the trap
- Transporting the trapped cat
- Veterinary intervention
- Returning the cat to his/her outdoor habitat
- Cleaning the trap

2. Preparation

It is very important to be fully prepared prior to setting a trap. This includes having a fully charged mobile phone and your Community Cat Coalition (CCC) Identification card with you, wearing appropriate clothing (i.e. non-slip closed footwear with some tread, comfortable long trousers/jeans) and being equipped with a raincoat, sunscreen or sun hat depending on the weather conditions.

Secondly, in addition to having all your relevant trapping equipment (i.e. humane trap, trap cover, newspaper, adhesive tape, bait, spoon, shopping bag, water, cable ties, bungee rope, bicycle lock), ensure that you test the trap ahead of time to ensure that the trip plate works. This will save you the frustration of seeing a cat walk in and out of a trap that fails to close.



A humane trap is a galvanized steel cage (approximately 8kg in weight) designed to contain an animal without injury. There is a metal sliding door at the entrance with a magnet at the bottom and raised metal bars on each corner to allow the trap door to slide up and down correctly.

Food is placed beyond a trip plate inside. When the animal steps on the trip plate, it releases the catch, which causes the door to drop down enclosing the animal inside.

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Line the bottom of the trap with newspaper, folded lengthwise. This provides a more comfortable surface for the cat to walk on when entering the trap, but be sure to apply adhesive tape to the open sides of the newspaper, so a breeze will not blow its pages and frighten the cat. Place the folded and taped newspaper into the trap. Be sure the trap lining doesn't prevent the trap door from closing and locking.

Cover the trap with the **custom-made waterproof trap cover**, allowing the handles to pop through the two open slits, resulting in the CCP logo being visible on the one side of the trap. You can then secure the trap cover by attaching the Velcro straps on the four corners.

Note: If you do not have the trap cover, then revert to using a large towel or sheet to cover the cage ONLY once a cat has been trapped.

3. Setting the trap

The best time to trap a cat is at dusk, when it is getting darker. It is imperative that you are as quiet as possible when setting the traps so as to not frighten the cats away. Place a trap on **dry ground** and make certain it is **stable** and will not rock or tip. Do not place the trap on a hillside or incline. Try to place the traps where they will attract a cat and be **camouflaged**, for example, near a bush, tree or shrub where they normally eat. Be sure the front door of the trap has enough clearance to snap shut without getting caught on a branch, curb, fence, log, etc.

Lift the **front and back covers** of the cat cover, insert them under the steel handles of the trap so that you can **comfortably bait and set the trap**.

Remove the Perspex door to **bait the traps** by placing approximately one – two teaspoons of bait (cat food, tuna, sardines, mackerel, or other strong smelling food—usually the ones in oil work best) at the very **back of the trap** in the small plastic or disposable food dish or small flat piece of cardboard. Replace the Perspex door and ensure that the food dish is not too large or too close to the trap metal plate.

A **D-cup** can be attached to the inside of the trap, preferably towards the rear of the trap, to be able to provide fresh water for the cat. There is no special technique to refilling the D cup with water, but it may be easier to use a 750ml pump or sports water bottle.

To set a trap one needs to lift the trap steel door. While holding the trap door with one hand, grasp the metal rod with your other hand. Pull the rod horizontally until the tip of the metal rod is resting under the lifted trap door. This action causes the trap plate to lift. Please *note that the tip of the metal rod should not protrude more than a couple of couple of millimeters at most, or the trap door will not always drop down when cat steps on the plate.* Refer to **Troubleshooting if trap does not work** in FAQ's in Section 9 of this document.

To make entering the trap more enticing, you can either place a teaspoon of food just inside the entrance on top of the newspaper and/or drizzle some juice from the bait in a zigzag pattern along the newspaper toward the entrance and just outside the entrance of the trap.

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If you are using **multiple traps**, stagger them and have those facing different directions so as to avoid having cats see others getting trapped.

For added security, you can use the **bicycle lock and chain** to secure the trap to an object such as a tree or fence.

Ensure that the **side flaps** of the trap cover are down, but the front and back flaps are still secured under the trap handles. Now leave the area quietly as the trap is now set.

Stay within hearing range so that you can hear the bang of the steel door as it drops down. It is not good practice to watch the trap waiting for the cat to walk in, especially if timid cats you are trapping, as the cat is often watching you and will not venture out until you are out of sight. You can for example sit in your parked car with the radio off watching from a distance.

TIP: When trapping at night, clip a small light to the trap or nearby fence, so you can see when the door drops down. Cats don't seem to be too bothered with light as long as facing into the side of the trap and not straight into the entrance and the cats eyes.

4. Checking the trap

Move steadily and quietly towards the trap and promptly **cover the entire trap** with the waterproof cat cover (or with a large towel or sheet) to help keep the cats calm. Cats can injure their nose or scratch their face trying to escape, though once covered they will calm down very quickly

Move trapped cats away to a quiet, safe area to avoid scaring any remaining, untrapped cats. It is normal for cats to thrash around inside the trap. You may be tempted to release a thrashing cat because you fear that he/she will hurt him/herself, but cats calm down once the trap is completely covered. Remember, you are doing this for the cat's benefit. If the cat is released, he/she will continue to breed, and you may not be able to trap the cat again. Also, most injuries from humane cat traps are very minor, such as a bruised or bloody nose or a scratched paw pad.

Assess whether you have successfully trapped the target cat.

Lift the door and let the cat go if the cat is <ul style="list-style-type: none">• healthy and collared• healthy and eartipped	Cover & transport the following cats to your home and/or the Vet clinic: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sick and/or injured• cats with no collar and/or no ear-tip (i.e. not desexed)
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Update the Community Cat Tracking card for all cats to be transported to the Vet clinic. **EACH CAT** from the site will be allocated a **CAT number**, which is your initials followed by 3 numerical digits in ascending order from 001 – 900.

5. Transporting

It is important to use the **correct manual handling technique** to **lift and load the trap** into your vehicle

- Ensure you have clear access between you, the trap and your vehicle
- Stand alongside the trap and ensure that you have good and clear access to move your feet towards the vehicle.
- Step forward with your outside leg
- Bend your knees slowly, moving your body down to reach and grasp both handles



- Move towards the vehicle
- Keep trap close against your body
- Bend knees and place the trap on the plastic liner
- Keeping the knees bent and back straight, slide the trap to the correct position
- Secure the trap if necessary.

Never put trapped cats/kittens in the boot of a car or in the open deck of a truck or Ute —this is unsafe and it terrifies the cats. Place the traps on the seat or in the back of a **well-ventilated vehicle** on top of the plastic boot liner tray or waterproof plastic drop sheet which will protect your car's upholstery from smelly pee accidents.

Never place traps on top of one another and be sure to secure the traps with **bungee cords** or other restraints if necessary. If an unsecured trap tips sideways or upside down, it can open and release the cat. Don't take the risk.

Be extremely careful when loading and unloading traps, as trap doors can easily get caught on each other and accidentally open.

Dependent on the health status, the time of the day and veterinary availability the cat will either be transported to your home or to the Vet clinic.

If the cat is in the trap just for one night do not put food into trap as most cats are too traumatized and will not eat that first night anyhow. If the cat is scheduled for surgery the next day, it should not eat the night before.

If it is necessary the cat has to stay in the trap an extra day as the vet is too busy, slide a little food under the plastic door by putting it on a flat piece of cardboard and slipping in under the door. Very important, open just a couple of centimeters only the height of half a finger maximum height, definitely no more, or the cat will sometimes lunge at the gap to escape, they are quick!

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It is best practice to keep the trap fully covered and to place the trap in a safe and quiet place with good ventilation. It is also recommended to place the trap in an elevated position (i.e. on a couple of bricks or something similar) so that when the cat urinates, the urine will drip through onto the plastic underneath the trap. Cats should have access to water at all times.

The following morning the cat is ready to go to the vet for a medical assessment, treatment and intervention. Ensure to take along the relevant cat tracking form.

6. Veterinary intervention/s

Part of the assessment of the cat by the Veterinary professional will include checking for a microchip. If the owned cat is sick or injured, the Vet clinic will make contact with the owner. If the cat is unowned sick/injured, discuss the treatment options and costs with the Vet.

All eligible community cats will receive relevant medical treatment (if necessary), be desexed using dissolvable sutures, ear-tipped** microchipped and receive flea treatment while under anaesthetic. All relevant information to be updated on the cat tracking form.

****Ear tipping** is an effective and universally accepted method to identify a spayed or neutered stray/community cat. It is the removal of the distal one-quarter of a **cat's left ear**, which is a maximum of 1 cm, in an adult and proportionally smaller in a kitten.



Post-surgery recovery time:

Cat types	When to return to site after surgery
Actively lactating female (nursing)	Same day
Healthy male neuters	Same day
Healthy female spays	Same day - 12 hours
Heavily pregnant spays	Next day (24 hours)

When collecting the cat from the veterinary clinic, please ensure that:

- All desexed community cats have been ear-tipped
- The clinic ID collars have been removed from all cats
- Section C of the Cat tracking sheet have been completed by the vet clinic.

9. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

The trap is not working correctly, appears to be broken

Trap Troubleshooting: Often the metal prong that holds the door up can be dislodged. Often this will happen at the vet clinic when a lot of vets tip over the trap to give the cat an intramuscular sedative. The metal bar attached to the trip plate must always be *between* the two horizontal bars at the front top end of the trap where the metal drop door is. If this is not in between the two bars, the trap will not work and often to new trappers it is frustrating as they think they have a faulty trap.

My trap is definitely broken and/or damaged

Do not attempt to fix any broken or damaged traps yourself, but rather inform the CCC Secretary and return it to Eagle Wire.

Can I bait the trap with chicken bones?

No, please remove the meat from the bones. Alternatively, one can use fishy type food such as **gourmet tuna** or **Dine Tuna white meat**.

The current bait does not seem to be working and I am battling to trap my cat?

Firstly ensure that your trip plate is operating correctly. KFC seems to get the stubborn ones every time.

Why should one use a waterproof trap cover?

The cover will not only encourage the cat to go inside the trap, since it appears to be a covered, safe place, but will also protect the trapped cat from the natural elements and possibly being injured by other animals or a malicious person.

Why should the trap cover be pulled away from the rear Perspex door?

Please ensure that the rear trap cover is pulled away from the **Perspex door** as most stray timid cats will not go into a dead end trap. They prefer to be able to see straight through the other end or will not enter the trap!

I do not own a custom-designed waterproof trap cover to close the trap once the cat has been trapped, what can I use?

A sheet cut to size, or large towel is best to be used to cover the trap, as air can still get into the trap. DO not use plastic covering the entire trap as it is far too hot in summer months.

Can I open the trap, as the trapped cat seems semi-conscious?

You should **never open the trap or try to touch a conscious or semi-conscious cat**. Behave appropriately around trapped cats by being calm, quiet, and not touching them.

Should one release all collared trapped cats?

No, *Collars do not necessarily mean a cat is owned* as often cats with collars are lost too, sometimes thin after living rough. Sometimes a collar is imbedded in the neck of the cat if the cat has been living rough for some years. Check the condition before releasing, however, all sick or injured cats are to be transported to the vet.

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Can I set a trap during heavy rainfalls?

Never set traps in extreme temperatures, hot or cold or very heavy rainfall.

Can I leave a trap overnight?

While it is not preferably to leave a trap overnight, at times it may be necessary. It is recommended to take reasonable steps to safeguard the cat from potential predators or cruel persons and the trap from thieves, by ensuring the trap is camouflaged and securing secure the trap to a tree, fence or object with a bicycle combination lock.

The trapped cat is refusing to eat while inside the trap?

Most cats will not eat while in the trap, so the shorter the time held the better. Do not worry if the cat does not eat for a day as it will eat once released, so make sure you leave food down where released.

What about trap-shy cats?

Observing other cats being caught in the trap and jumping around all night, could make some cats trap-shy.

The best way to gain the confidence of these difficult-to-trap nervous cats, is to use the trap as a feeding station. This can be done by removing both doors of the trap, securing the trap to a tree or fence or in a secure spot.

Make sure the top of the trap is covered securely with plastic so the food will not get ruined if it rains, as you want the cat to go in and out and feel relaxed that nothing sinister has happened when inside.

We recommend placing a glass bowl with a decent amount of food, into a plant saucer filled with water to prevent ants ruining the food. Both the glass bowl and plant saucer is readily available at the Warehouse or \$2 shops.

Sometimes it takes 3 – 4 nights to gain that trust, while in extreme cases it could be months, however, with preservation the trap-shy cat will be trapped.