

Chapter 7: Health & Safety

The CCC is committed to ensuring the personal safety of its members during the performance of their voluntary work in the Community. It is imperative that the members are not only fully aware of potential hazards, but are trained to assess and mitigate the risks for themselves and the Colony cats in their care.

7.1. Manual Handling Techniques

If you are lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, moving, holding or restraining a trap, then you could be at risk of injuring yourself especially if the object is heavy, bulky, or difficult to move. Injuries are common when incorrectly lifting or lowering heavy or awkward items (i.e. traps) and can also occur when lifting, carrying or lowering objects for long periods of time without having a rest. Please follow the guidelines in the **Manual Handling Techniques** (Annexure N) to reduce the risk of injury to yourself when handling the traps

7.2. Site Safety Assessment

We suggest you refer to the **Hazard Register** (Annexure O) and study control methods to reduce the risks both to yourself and your buddy. **Site Safety Assessments** (Annexure P), involves scanning the environment for any potential hazards.

7.3. Zoonotic diseases

When working with felines, it is important to understand ALL aspects of health and safety, including infection/disease that can be contracted from a cat to a human, known as zoonotic diseases. Having an understanding of zoonotic diseases, and knowing what to do reduce the chance of contracting one is hugely important. The common zoonotic diseases are outline below.

Toxoplasmosis is a parasitic disease. Cats shed the parasite's eggs in their faeces. This disease can be passed on by ingesting food and water contaminated by cat faeces, from cleaning or handling infected litter, also it can be contracted from gardening without gloves. Those most at risk from side effects of this disease are pregnant women, as handling faeces without gloves can put their fetus at risk. If pregnant, it is advisable to avoid direct contact with cat faeces at all times.

Salmonella is one of the most common zoonotic diseases in humans. It can be contracted by various means and not just from contact with cats, however it is usually contracted by people consuming food or water from a contaminated source. Animals living in overcrowded conditions can possibly pass on this disease to its handlers.

Catch-scratch fever is a bacterial disease carried by cats, most often kittens. It is transmitted to humans via cat bites or scratches.

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease predominantly carried by cattle in New Zealand, and dogs.



Giardiasis is a disease that affects the intestinal tract. Contracted by exposure to contaminated food, water, or by exposure to infected animals, through cleaning up animal faeces. Often bird droppings in water can spread this disease.

Ringworm is not a worm, but a fungal skin infection. Infection occurs from direct contact with infected animals, where the infected spores on hair has been shed on bedding. The irregular shaped spots of fur loss on animals around face, ears and paws is often an indicator that the pet has ringworm. On humans, it is usually visible by a round raised circle with itchy red scaly spots. Various animals can carry this fungus infection which is easily treated with antifungal treatments. Ringworm causes little distress and is not an emergency, but it is highly contagious to all animals and people.

7.4. Personal Safety & Security

Many issues relating to ensuring your personal health and safety has already been mentioned in this document.

A few key issues include:

- Wear the appropriate clothing in hot and/or cold weather
- Never open the trap or attempt to touch the cat/kitten.
- Do not take unnecessary risks, which includes:
 - not entering any properties enclosed with gates/fences
 - avoiding properties where there are indications of dogs
 - argue with an aggressor

Priority is to keep yourself safe. If you find yourself facing potential conflicts with people in the community, remember to remain calm, polite and constructive. Listen to others' concerns and work toward a mutually agreeable solution.

Please make available the relevant contact details for **queries and/or complaints**:

- SPCA Auckland's contact details www.sPCA.org.nz or phone: 09 256 7300.
- Community Cat Coalition www.catcoalition.org.nz

If, however, you believe at any time you feel unsafe or the situation becomes heated or escalated, do not attempt to resolve the situation, but rather politely excuse yourselves and walk away. If you feel your personal safety is at risk, call 111 for assistance.

