



Safe Homes for Outdoor Cats

From the PAWS *Happy, Healthy, and Safe* Education Series



Many humane societies do not allow their cats to be adopted into homes where they will be allowed outdoors. PAWS does not have this requirement. We believe that there are too many cats for too few homes to limit their placement as indoor cats only. While cats enjoy the outdoors, the dangers that outdoor cats face are real. They include being hit by a car, attacks by dogs or wild animals, poisoning, entrapment, unfriendly humans, and unsolved disappearances. We would like to offer these suggestions to help make your outdoor cat just a little bit safer.

- An outdoor cat may run off from fright or confusion. Until the cat understands where home is, it needs to be contained in a room or a crate for at least the first three days.
- Outdoor cats should have a cozy and warm shelter. A shed, a garage, a barn, a tack room, or a cat house under a carport are good options. Leaving the cat to find its own shelter is not acceptable.
- Even outdoor cats love cozy, clean, and warm bedding. Their shelters should include beds and bedding, especially in the winter.
- Special heating pads for outdoor cats are available at pet shops including PetSmart.
- Food and water dishes should be kept as clean and ant-free as they would for indoor cats. Water should be fresh every day. In the winter, please watch that their water is not frozen.
- Night is the most dangerous time for outdoor cats to be roaming free. Please consider giving your outdoor cat(s) shelter inside, such as inside the garage or closed porch just for night-time.
- Outdoor cats should always wear collars so that they can be identified as pets by neighbors and animal control. Collars that can be adjusted to the cat's neck without extra length are available at pet stores. These collars break away if the cat gets it caught on something. There should be room to fit three fingers between the cat's neck and the collar and the collar should be checked frequently to make sure it is not too tight. A collar that is too loose can get caught on the cat's jaw when it is grooming, a dangerous and frightening experience for the cat. Collars with bells will help you locate your cat and may even save a bird or two.
- Microchipping has helped many dogs and cats find their way home after going missing. It is an especially good idea for outdoor cats. Ask PAWS or your vet for information on low-cost microchipping.
- Outdoor cats must always be up-to-date on vaccinations and flea/tick treatment. Outdoor cats are also at risk for heartworm. There are treatments available that prevent all three.
- Outdoor cats need love and attention every day.
- Good luck and best wishes for a long and happy life with your outdoor cat!

PAWS OF HERTFORD COUNTY, INC

Protecting Animals Worth Saving

PO Box 153, Murfreesboro, NC 27855

252.358.7861

pawsofhertfordcounty.com