

Barn Cat Relocation Tips

Items to have ready

- A place to comfortably and safely confine the cats temporarily in their new location. A large cage, a cat condo, or a large dog kennel can work well. Some people use a garden shed, a tack room, a garage, workshop, or a small room in their house. Just be sure the cat cannot escape.
- Cat food: dry kibble and canned food
- Litter box, litter, and litter scoop
- Food and water bowls
- Blankets
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Transportation

The cats can be transported in humane traps or in standard carriers. If you are driving, make sure the temperature is maintained at a comfortably cool level. Secure carriers in the vehicle by using seatbelts if possible. You may want to lightly cover the traps or carriers, but do not block air circulation. Do not leave food and water in the carriers, but do stop to offer water every few hours for longer trips.

General relocation recommendations

- Barn cats are cats that are accustomed to living outdoors and are generally not socialized to people. Fearful in nature, these cats, sometimes referred to as feral cats, will run and hide. If cornered or reached for, they may scratch or bite, so take appropriate caution.
- Set the confinement cage/room up so that it is as clean and comfortable as possible. Be sure there is adequate air and light available. Include food and water bowls, bedding and ideally a place for the cat to climb up high and feel safe. Any introduction between new cats and other pets must be supervised and positive, so the animals can become comfortable with each other gradually.
- Relocate more than one cat from a colony, if possible. Cats are social creatures and are more likely to stick around if relocated with cats they already know.
- Feed on a regular schedule—preferably twice a day. Ideally, meals should include both wet and dry food. Rattle the food in a box or bowl each time you feed so the cat associates the sound with food. Give the cat treats occasionally as well.
- Cat(s) will need to be confined for at least several days up to 3 weeks. Some people keep relocated cats confined for longer, but it is important to pay attention to the individual cat's comfort level. Too much confinement can backfire too, and the cat will run away. The idea is for the cat to settle in and get to know its food source, shelter, and familiarize itself with sounds and smells before it has access to outdoors.
- Cat(s) should be confined where they can see and smell their new surroundings (especially other cats, the caretaker, and the feeding location).
- Talk to the cat and let him see and smell you several times a day—especially when you bring food.
- When you release the cat into its new yard, continue feeding on the same schedule as before.
- Once released, maintain access to the room or cage where the cat(s) were confined. Leave out bedding and litterbox for smell. Some people sprinkle the used litter around the yard.

Questions, please contact Emy Nettleblad, Outreach Manager at Ark-Valley Humane Society at (719) 395-2737 or enettleblad@ark-valley.org. Thank you for helping us save lives!