



# Trapping Guide

*All cats brought to a Catnip Sunday clinic must be confined and transported within a humane wire trap. If you don't have your own trap(s), Operation Catnip maintains approximately 700 humane traps that we can lend you.*

## *Before You Trap*

### Establish a Predictable Feeding Schedule

Feed the cats at the same time and place each day for at least two weeks in advance of the clinic. Trapping is most effective when cats are fed on a predictable schedule. Advise your neighbors not to feed the cats while you are actively trapping, and keep pet cats indoors as much as possible.

### Prepare a Holding Area and Transport Vehicle

Prepare a warm, dry and secure area to hold the cats before and after the clinic. A garage or other sheltered area is best. Use wood or bricks to elevate the traps off the ground so that if cats eliminate, waste will fall through. Spread newspapers to catch any stool, urine, or food. Spray the area with a cat-safe flea spray to discourage ants.

Prepare the vehicle you will use to transport cats with a plastic liner such as a trash bag or tarp to prevent urine damage. Always remove soiled liners promptly.

## *Trapping*

### Set the Trap(s)

Trapping the day before the clinic is best. Don't trap in the rain or heat of day unless there is adequate protection from the elements. Cats can suffer exposure during storms or heatstroke in the sun. Set the trap(s) on a flat level surface where you normally feed the cats and before their normal feeding time.

- ◆ If trapping in a public area, try to conceal the traps from the view of people passing (they may release or harm trapped cats). Bushes provide good camouflage. One trap should not be visible from another trap to prevent trapped cats from spooking others.
- ◆ Securely latch the rear door (if the trap has one). Open the front trap door. A small hook on the top of the trap catches on the wire door. The hook holds the door open



and raises the trip plate. When the cat steps on the plate, the hook releases the door and closes the trap. After setting the door, check the release mechanism by pushing the trip plate down with a pencil. The door should close smoothly and lock securely.

- ◆ Once the trap is set, cover it with a towel or cloth while leaving the opening exposed. The cover will help to camouflage the trap and serve to calm the cat after it is caught. Some cats prefer a trap that is out in the open as opposed to a confined space. A best practice is to cover some traps while leaving others exposed.

## Bait the Trap(s)

Make sure no other food is available while traps are set. Use smelly wet food. Canned mackerel is effective and inexpensive. Place a tiny amount of food outside the trap then a little leading inside to more behind the trip plate. The cat must go to the back of the trap to step on the plate. Some cats are skilled at stealing food from traps, and tying a piece of meat that dangles over the trip plate can help prevent that.

Mothers and kittens are attracted to each other. Place the captured kittens or mother in a closed cat carrier facing the back of trap. Thus you can use them to attract each other to the traps. Never put more than one animal in the trap. Even mothers may hurt their kittens if frightened.

## Check Trap(s) Frequently

Don't leave the trap unattended for long periods. Trapped cats are vulnerable, and passersby may release the cat or steal the trap. However, don't linger within sight of the cats, or they will be wary.

## Cover Trapped Cat(s)

Cover the trap as soon as a cat is caught. Uncovered, the cat may panic and injure itself thrashing in the trap. Remove the trap to the holding area.

## Check Trapped Cat(s)

Check trapped cats for a collar or tipped ear. If a nursing female is captured, check the trapping area for kittens. Nursing females must be released within 24 hours to nurse their kittens. If other wild animals or an unintended cat are captured, release the animal in a quiet area within sight of where it was trapped.



## Withhold Food and Restrict Water

Hold the cats in their traps until the clinic and limit food and water. Cats must have **no food after midnight the night before surgery**. Water should be provided if the cat is held longer than 18 hours. Cats will usually remain calm as long as they are covered. Check on them periodically.

## Do Not Handle the Cat(s)

Cats that feel threatened may scratch and bite. Don't allow children or pets near the traps. Wash hands and change clothes and shoes before handling pets to prevent spreading any contagious diseases. Because free-roaming community cats are in contact with wildlife, consider getting a rabies vaccination from your local Health Department or doctor.

*All animal bites are serious!* If bitten, seek immediate medical attention and do not release the cat because it will need to be quarantined.

## *After Surgery*

### Monitor Cats in Traps Overnight

Keep cats in their trap in a warm, dry, and secure holding area until they are fully recovered, and ready to be released the next day. Cats are susceptible to heat and cold while recovering. They will be disoriented and unable to defend themselves and the traps provide protection essential for the health and safety of all cats, including nursing cats with kittens.

### Withhold Food and Water in the Traps

Do not give the cats food or water in the traps. They will spill the water and may vomit if fed. Food and water may be provided in the morning after surgery when they are fully awake before they are released.

### Release the Cats

The morning following the Catnip Sunday clinic, when the cats are fully awake, return them to the area where they were trapped, and away from busy streets. **Do not relocate the cats.** Cats released in an unfamiliar place will be disoriented and will run until exhausted or hit by cars.



To release the cat, hold the trap facing away from you and open the door. Usually the cat will run out of the trap. If it is confused, tilt the back of the trap up and gently tap on the top to encourage it out. **Never put your fingers or hands in the trap!**

If a cat is not yet fully recovered by the morning after surgery, call the emergency contact number provided on the medical record provided at the time of discharge.

## *Trap Resources*

- ◆ Cat trap  
[http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=categories.view&category\\_id=590](http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=categories.view&category_id=590)
- ◆ Drop trap  
[http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=categories.view&category\\_id=751](http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=categories.view&category_id=751)
- ◆ Trap divider  
[http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=categories.view&category\\_id=591](http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=categories.view&category_id=591)
- ◆ Feral cat box  
[http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=products.view&product\\_id=30238](http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=products.view&product_id=30238)
- ◆ Injection shield for cats i plastic feral cat boxes  
[http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=products.view&product\\_id=30238](http://www.livetraps.com/index.php?dispatch=products.view&product_id=30238)
- ◆ TruCatch  
<http://www.trucatchtraps.com/small-animal-traps>