



SAFE Holding Areas and Transportation

Cats are extremely vulnerable when in traps. While you are doing a wonderful thing to get these homeless cats spayed or neutered, one moment of poor judgment or carelessness on your part can quickly lead to tragedy for one of your cats.

Two critical phases of the TNR process are holding cats overnight before and after surgery and transporting them to and from the clinic. Please read this thoroughly so you can avoid any mistakes that would put the lives of your cats in jeopardy.

SELECTING HOLDING AREAS:

You will need to keep your trapped cats in a holding area the night before your surgery appointment and the night after surgery. It's critical that you select an appropriate holding area for your cats so they are safe and comfortable.

- Make sure your holding area is a safe, indoor location. Examples are laundry rooms, bathrooms, heated/ventilated enclosed patios, etc. Garages or sheds work as long as the temperature outside is mild. If you're holding cats in a garage or a shed, make sure you can lock it securely. **DO NOT LEAVE THE TRAPPED CATS OUTSIDE OVERNIGHT OR IN YOUR YARD UNSECURED.**
- The holding area should be dry. Cats who get wet or damp can become hypothermic quickly.
- Regulate the temperature. Warm up your holding area in the winter and cool it off in the summer. The temperature should be moderate, not extreme, at all times. When the weather heats up outside, the temperature in garages, storage rooms, laundry rooms and other enclosed areas may rise to intolerable levels quickly. Heat stroke can happen very quickly. Likewise, during colder weather, these areas may be unheated, drafty or exposed. Make sure you regulate the temperature so that it's moderate at all times. In the summer, cool down your holding area with fans and proper ventilation. In the winter, make sure there is adequate heating. Remember, if it's not comfortable for you, it's even less comfortable for the cat.
- Make sure there is adequate ventilation! This sounds like common sense, but if a holding area is too small, stuffy, or cramped and there is not enough ventilation, your cats are in jeopardy of dying. Likewise, if you have too many blankets on the traps to keep them warm, your cats may not be getting enough air. Be extremely cautious that your holding area provides adequate ventilation for your cats.
- The holding area should be away from dangers such as toxic fumes, other animals or household pets. Cats have an extremely sensitive sense of smell, and fumes in small, enclosed areas can build up and become toxic quickly. Also, if you're holding the cats inside your house, make sure you don't allow Felix or Fido to go anywhere near the trapped cats.
- The area should be quiet and away from people so that the cats remain calm; however, it should be an area that is convenient for you to periodically check on the cats throughout the night.
- Do not hold cats in your vehicle overnight. This is very unsafe, as cars cannot provide enough ventilation AND security at the same time. Also, temperature changes can happen incredibly fast in vehicles.
- Do not stack traps on top of each other in your holding area. Your holding area needs to be big enough for each trap to be safely on the ground. Traps that are stacked on top of each other run the risk of not having enough ventilation for the cats. Cats can also thrash around, which could cause a trap to fall. Or they could injure each other through the bars of the trap when in close proximity.

- MONITOR, MONITOR, MONITOR. Don't place your trapped cats in your holding area and forget about them for the night. You need to check on them a few times throughout the night and again first thing in the morning to make sure there are no issues.

TRANSPORTING:

Safely transporting cats to and from the clinic means more than just driving carefully. Here are some "rules of the road" for keeping your cats as calm and safe as possible during transport.

- Do not transport the trapped cats in the trunk of your car, in an open bed truck or in an open Jeep Wrangler. None are safe situations for your cats. In the trunk of a car, cats will not get enough ventilation. Transporting cats in an open bed truck or Jeep is both unsafe and extremely terrifying to cats. If you don't have an appropriate vehicle for transportation, make arrangements with a friend or rent something for the day.
- Protect the interior of your car from cats spraying, urinating or defecating. Line with an old blanket and then use newspaper on top of it. Puppy pee pads make great protectors, as they have a light plastic on one side and absorbent material on the other like a diaper. You can buy these at most pet stores. **BE CAREFUL WHEN USING PLASTIC AND MAKE SURE THE PLASTIC ISN'T WRAPPED AROUND THE TRAP IN ANY WAY. PLASTIC CAN CAUSE SUFFOCATION AND/OR HEAT STROKE FOR CATS WHEN WRAPPED AROUND A TRAP.**
- Be extremely careful when stacking traps on top of each other during transport. Traps that are stacked on top of each other run the risk of not having enough air to them. Also, urine and/or feces from top traps will go right through to the bottom ones unless you use puppy pads or newspaper between the stacked traps. **NEVER USE PLASTIC BETWEEN STACKED TRAPS BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF SUFFOCATION AND/OR HEAT STROKE.** If traps must be stacked inside a vehicle, be sure to secure the traps with bungee cords or other restraints so they don't tip over and potentially open and release the cat. Remember, if it seems precarious, don't take the risk.
- Again, do not hold cats in your vehicle overnight in preparation for transporting in the morning. You may think this is a great way to get your cats ready for the trip into the clinic in the morning, but this is very unsafe. Cars do not provide enough ventilation for the cats, and in warmer weather, a hot car can quickly become a hot oven.
- Heaven On Earth Society for Animals is a non-profit organization that helps transport cats to/from FixNation for people who live in the San Fernando Valley and cannot transport cats themselves. Their website is www.heavenlypets.org and you can contact them either by email at spay@heavenlypets.org or at 818-474-2700 ext. 6. They may be able to help you if you live in the San Fernando Valley.

A FINAL NOTE ABOUT TRAP COVERS:

When holding your cats overnight and while transporting them to and from the clinic, you will need to keep your cats **FULLY COVERED** at all times.

To cover your trapped cat, use a towel, a blanket or some sort of material as a trap cover. The material should be big enough to fully cover the trap, reaching all the way down to the bottom of each side. If it doesn't fully cover the trap, then use two covers. Fully covering the trap helps to reduce the stress level of the cat.

NEVER USE PLASTIC OF ANY KIND, EITHER AS A TRAP COVER OR WRAPPED AROUND YOUR TRAP, AS CATS CAN EASILY SUFFOCATE OR SUFFER HEAT STROKE. Cats still need ventilation while they are covered, so only material trap covers should be used. Cats also often pull part of the trap cover into the trap with them, and if plastic is highly dangerous should they ingest any.