

OAKLAND CATS ON PATROL - ADOPTION GUIDELINES & TIPS

Congratulations! You have just adopted Oakland Patrol Cats and saved their lives! We want the process to be a successful one so have put together the following guidelines for you to use:

THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU BRING YOUR CATS HOME:

1. **Permanent Shelter:** Identify the building or room that will be the permanent home base for your new working cats. Make sure that the building is secure and that the cats cannot escape from it during their acclimation period. If the room is not escape-proof, you must provide a large wire-frame dog kennel (crate) to confine the cats during adaptation.
2. Determine if you will do a **caged or uncaged adaptation**. If you have a small, secure, **escape-proof** room or structure such as a tack room or shed, an uncaged adaptation is possible. If you do not have a suitable space that is completely escape-proof, you must do a caged adaptation.
3. **For an uncaged adaptation:**
 - a. **Carefully inspect the room or structure for escape routes.** Feral cats can and will escape through very small openings. If they escape before completing the adaptation period you may never see them again. If the room cannot be made escape-proof, do a caged adaptation instead (see below).
 - b. The specific arrangement will depend on the space you have available. Provide a perch and places to hide, along with soft bedding, litter box, and food/water bowls. Contact us with any questions.
 - c. Use care whenever entering or leaving the room to prevent the cats from escaping.
4. Collect all the necessary **supplies** you will need (we have created an Amazon shopping list [here](#) as well):
 - a. **For a caged adaptation:** Wire crate, at least 3' x 4'. Keeping the crate off the ground, such as on a folding table, will help the cats feel more comfortable.
 - b. Cat carrier den. If necessary, you can close the cat in the carrier to lock in the cat during cleaning.
 - c. Food and water bowls.
 - d. Litter pan and litter.
 - e. Towels or blankets for bedding.
 - f. Cage cover sheet. Make the cat feel secure by having the crate 75% covered at first. Gradually reduce the amount the crate is covered as the cats become more confident.

Typical setup for a Caged Adaptation:



ONCE YOU GET YOUR CATS HOME - THINGS TO DO DURING THE ADAPTATION PERIOD:

5. The cats (and their crates, if used) should be placed inside the secure building or room that you plan to use as their home base. If doing a caged adaptation, place the crate in a convenient location so that you can easily clean and feed the cats during their 3-4 week acclimation period.

KEY POINT: KEEP THE CATS IN THEIR CRATE OR CONFINED SPACE for at least 3 weeks. Your new cats are frightened and confused. They don't know where they are and they don't know that you are trying to help them. If you let them out too soon, they will run away, get lost, and possibly die.

6. Your cats are *microchipped*. You must follow the instructions included in your adoption packet to register the chip. This will ensure that your cats can be returned to you if they are ever lost and brought to animal control or a veterinarian.
7. **Feeding:** Feed the cats daily at approximately the same time. Feed both canned and dry food during the acclimation period. Provide fresh water daily. While you feed them, talk to the cats so that the cats learn that the sound of your voice means food!
8. **Litter Box:** You must provide a litter pan in the adaption crate or shelter, and clean it daily.
9. **At the end of the 3-4 weeks of the acclimation period,** simply leave the crate or building door open and allow the cats to come out at their own pace. Leave the crate in place and continue to feed them in this same area. Often the cats will return to sleep in the crate or the building where they feel safest.

THINGS TO DO AFTER THE ADAPTATION PERIOD:

10. **Feeding:** Continue to provide canned food for *at least a week after* releasing the cats, after which you may switch to dry food only, if you prefer. Providing desirable canned food during and immediately after the acclimation period will encourage the cats to remain.
 - a. After the cats are released, continue to provide cat food and water daily. Cats cannot live on mousing alone and they will leave your property for greener pastures if you don't provide food. They will still hunt rodents if you feed them because that is their natural instinct.
11. If you use a biodegradable *litter* during the acclimation period, you can spread the soiled litter around your property, which will serve to mark the cats' territory and may help deter rodents.
12. **Permanent Shelter:** Cats also need shelter from the elements and protection from predation of coyotes and other animals so make sure that they can get back into their shelter building at all times.

KEY POINT: FEED AND WATER the cats daily. Provide them access to their shelter at all times.

About Predators:

Predators such as coyotes, bobcats, and mountain lions will hunt and kill domestic cats. If there are coyotes in your vicinity, you must provide a secure shelter that the cats can escape to. The shelter should have openings large enough for the cats, but too small for the coyotes. The shelter should have a foundation to keep the coyotes from digging under it. If your property is in an area frequented by bobcats or mountain lions, it is most likely not a suitable habitat for working cats.

Questions?

Please contact us at oasworkingcats@gmail.com if you have questions, and tell others about our [Oakland Cats on Patrol Program](#). There is *no fee to adopt working cats* from Oakland Animal Services. If you'd like to support the program, please [make a tax-deductible donation](#) to Friends of Oakland Animal Services. Thank you!