

# Feral Cats: Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Guidelines & Clinics

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Version 9, September 23, 2005

Information about feral cats changes often.  
Always call a clinic or rescue organization to  
confirm their current policies.



# Contents

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1. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Overview	
Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Instructions . . . . .	1-7
Quick Start: A TNR Example . . . . .	1-8
2. Clinics that Fix Feral Cats	
Peninsula Fix Our Ferals (PFOF) . . . . .	2-12
Appointments . . . . .	2-12
Phone . . . . .	2-12
Hours . . . . .	2-12
Days . . . . .	2-12
Web Page . . . . .	2-12
Cost . . . . .	2-12
Address . . . . .	2-13
Palo Alto Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic . . . . .	2-14
Appointments . . . . .	2-14
Phone . . . . .	2-14
Hours . . . . .	2-14
Days . . . . .	2-14
Web Page . . . . .	2-14
Cost . . . . .	2-14
Address . . . . .	2-14
Map . . . . .	2-15
Humane Society Silicon Valley . . . . .	2-16

Appointments . . . . .	2-16
Phone . . . . .	2-16
Hours/Days . . . . .	2-16
Web Page . . . . .	2-16
Cost . . . . .	2-16
Address . . . . .	2-17
Map . . . . .	2-17
Peninsula Humane Society (PHS) . . . . .	2-18
Appointments . . . . .	2-18
Phone . . . . .	2-18
Hours . . . . .	2-18
Days . . . . .	2-18
Web Page . . . . .	2-18
Cost . . . . .	2-18
Address . . . . .	2-18
Map . . . . .	2-19
Animal Medical Clinic (AMC) . . . . .	2-20
Appointments . . . . .	2-20
Phone . . . . .	2-20
Hours . . . . .	2-20
Days . . . . .	2-20
Cost . . . . .	2-20
Address . . . . .	2-21
Map . . . . .	2-21
Bay Cities Veterinary Clinic . . . . .	2-22
Appointments . . . . .	2-22
Phone . . . . .	2-22
Hours . . . . .	2-22
Days . . . . .	2-22
Cost . . . . .	2-22
Address . . . . .	2-23
Map . . . . .	2-23
Others . . . . .	2-23

3. Where to Rent or Buy Traps	
An-Jan Feed & Pet Supply (sales) . . . . .	3-25
Butchie's Pet & Feed Supply (sales and rentals) . . . . .	3-25
Evergreen Pet Center (rentals) . . . . .	3-26
For Other Living Things (rentals) . . . . .	3-26
Humane Society Silicon Valley- Alpha Pet Store (rentals) . . . . .	3-26
Palo Alto Humane Society CatWorks Program (rentals). . . . .	3-26
Pet Planet (rentals) . . . . .	3-26
Pet's Choice (sales and rentals) . . . . .	3-26
Pets & More (sales and rentals) . . . . .	3-27
Peninsula Fix Our Ferals (rentals) . . . . .	3-27
PETCO (rentals) . . . . .	3-27
San Jose Animal Care & Services (rentals) . . . . .	3-27
Sam's Downtown Feed & Pet Supply (sales and rentals). . . . .	3-27
Animal Care & Equipment Services (sales only) . . . . .	3-27
Tru-Catch Traps (sales only) . . . . .	3-27
Tomahawk Live Trap Company (sales only) . . . . .	3-28

Appendix A. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Guidelines From the Internet

Fix Our Ferals of Berkeley . . . . .	A-2
Plan Ahead . . . . .	A-2
Notify Neighbors . . . . .	A-3
Gather Equipment . . . . .	A-3
Bait and Set Traps . . . . .	A-3
Those hard-to-catch cats: . . . . .	A-4
Trap! Wait and Check, Wait and Check . . . . .	A-4
You Caught a Cat! . . . . .	A-5
To Trap or Not to Trap: The Lactating-Female Dilemma . . . . .	A-5
Capturing Kittens . . . . .	A-6
Pre-Surgery Holding Procedures. . . . .	A-6
Post-Surgical Care. . . . .	A-6

Return! Releasing the Cat . . . . .	A-7
Clean the Trap . . . . .	A-8
Feral Cat Coalition (FCC) San Diego . . . . .	A-9
Preparation for trapping . . . . .	A-9
Setting the traps . . . . .	A-10
Waiting for success . . . . .	A-11
Holding procedures . . . . .	A-11
Releasing the cats . . . . .	A-12
Helpful hints . . . . .	A-12
Alley Cat Allies . . . . .	A-13
Before You Trap . . . . .	A-13
Supplies . . . . .	A-13
Withhold Food . . . . .	A-14
Start Trapping . . . . .	A-14
Special Trapping Tips . . . . .	A-15
After Trapping . . . . .	A-15
San Francisco SPCA . . . . .	A-17
How Humane Traps Work . . . . .	A-17
Conditioning the Cat to the Trap . . . . .	A-17
Trapping . . . . .	A-17
Hard To Catch Cats . . . . .	A-18
Trapping Kittens . . . . .	A-18
Selective Trapping . . . . .	A-18
Post-Surgery Care . . . . .	A-18
San Francisco SPCA Resources . . . . .	A-19

Appendix B.      Rescue Groups and Shelters

# 1

## Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Overview

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Using the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) method you can help homeless kitties by humanely controlling their population. In the following section, I've listed a few online sites that provide guidance on how to TNR, after that I've provided a "TNR Quick Start" which describes my TNR process. For more information about helping feral cats, see *Silicon Valley Friends of Ferals* at [www.svff.org](http://www.svff.org).

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### 1.1 Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Instructions

The following groups provide detailed online TNR guidelines:

- Fix Our Ferals of Berkeley (<http://www.fixourferals.org/index.php?pager=trapping>)
- Feral Cat Coalition San Diego, California (<http://www.feralcat.com/trapinst.html>)
- Alley Cat Allies ([http://www.alleycat.org/resources\\_care.html#3](http://www.alleycat.org/resources_care.html#3))
- San Francisco SPCA ([http://www.sfspca.org/gifs/pdf\\_factsheets/Humane.pdf](http://www.sfspca.org/gifs/pdf_factsheets/Humane.pdf))

If you don't have Internet access, I'm including content from these links in Appendix B.

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## 1.2 Quick Start: A TNR Example

Here's what I do when I need to TNR a cat I've been feeding. I have my own trap, if you don't have a trap, go to [Chapter 3, "Where to Rent or Buy Traps"](#); or, go online to the

- *Peninsula Fix Our Ferals* link:  
<http://www.peninsulafixourferals.org/traps.html>
- *Alley Cat Allies* link: <http://www.alleycat.org/pdf/selection.pdf>.

My TNR process:

1. I get an appointment to have the cat fixed. For clinics I use, and their respective costs, addresses, phone numbers, and so on, see [Chapter 2, "Clinics that Fix Feral Cats"](#).
2. I withhold food the day before trapping. I usually trap on Sundays, so no food on Saturday.
3. The day of trapping, I get out my trap and test it out. I always want to make sure it's working and that I understand how it works. I'm not mechanically inclined.
4. I prepare my car for transporting the trapped cat by putting plastic and newspapers where I will be placing the cat.
5. I gather the following trapping items and put them in my car
  - a. trap
  - b. towel to cover the trap after I trap the cat
  - c. newspaper to put in bottom of trap, and clothespins or clips to attach paper (If it's too windy, I sometimes don't use the newspaper.)
  - d. tuna for bait  
As far as the bait, different cats seem to like different bait, so you can try several different things, like smelly canned food, KFC, etc...
  - e. small piece of cardboard or plastic lid to put the tuna on  
**Important:** do not use glass bowls, this could injure the cat.
  - f. plastic spoon
  - g. lids, to put on unused cat food
  - h. paper towels
  - i. water, to rinse my hands if I get cat food on them
6. At the trapping site, I
  - a. Attach the newspaper to the trap  
I like using clothespins as they are a little longer than binder clips and easier to remove.



- b. Put the bait on the cardboard and place it in the trap, as far back as possible. I use about 2-3 tablespoons of tuna.
  - c. Put a half teaspoon of bait in the front of the trap and in the middle of the trap, to encourage the cat to go into the trap.
  - d. Make sure my trap doors/latches are secure. I double check them.
  - e. Set the trap and wait. I try to be out of the cats sight but still able to watch the area. I check the trap about every 30 minutes.
7. When I trap a cat, I immediately cover the trap with a towel - I never remove the towel. The cat will be thrashing around a lot, but kitty calms down when you cover the trap.
  8. **Important:** At this point, do not open the trap to remove food in the trap. The cat is probably very upset now and can easily push the trap door up and get out.
  9. After about five minutes, I remove the clothespins/binder clips from the trap to reduce chance of kitty injury. I pick the trap up and put the cat in my car. The cat is usually very quiet.
  10. When I get the cat to my house, I check for food left in the trap. There is usually not much. To remove food, I don't open the trap, I have a little grabber tool I use. If the cat is too wild, I don't do this. There is usually not much food left in the trap. I keep the cat in my garage with a towel covering the trap.
  11. I transport the cat to the clinic in the morning and pick the cat up that afternoon.
  12. The kitty will be groggy or wobbly after surgery. It is important to keep the cat a least 24 hours before returning. An anesthetized cat is disoriented and uncoordinated, and very vulnerable if released too soon. For females cats, the surgical spay procedure is much more invasive than the male neuter procedure -- some SVFF members often keep females 48-72 hours to give the cat additional time to recover.
  13. The cat should be fairly alert before given food or water. I give the cat flavored human baby food in the evening after surgery. I open the trap 1/2 an inch and slip the food in. I save skinny plastic lids for this purpose. Be very careful as the cat may attack. You can always drop dry food in through the top of the trap.
  14. The next day, I give the cat a can of cat food in the morning, and if the cat is eating and alert, I release him that evening; If I have a female, I wait until the next evening to give her another day to recover.

**Important:** Always call the clinic to confirm cost/etc because processes/policies often change.

# 2

## Clinics that Fix Feral Cats

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Here's some clinics we use to fix our ferals:

- [2.1, Peninsula Fix Our Ferals \(PFOF\)](#)
- [2.2, Palo Alto Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic](#)
- [2.3, Humane Society Silicon Valley](#)
- [2.4, Peninsula Humane Society \(PHS\)](#)
- [2.5, Animal Medical Clinic \(AMC\)](#)
- [2.6, Bay Cities Veterinary Clinic](#)
- [2.7, Others](#)

I've described their cost, hours, location, phone, etc. in the following sections. If you find any information incorrect, please let me know. Always call the clinic to confirm cost/etc. because processes/policies often change.

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## 2.1 Peninsula Fix Our Ferals (PFOF)

Doctor Dana Gleason

Wonderful new project to help homeless kitties! Donation requested, volunteers needed.

I use this clinic a lot.

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### 2.1.1 Appointments

Typically PFOF does one clinic every 1.5 months on a Sunday. They make appointments for ferals. The appointments fill up fast.

Call them at 650-261-6665. Leave your name, a phone number where you can be reached and the best time to call, and the number of cats for which you want reservations. A volunteer will return your call that evening or day. **Call them back** if they don't respond in a day or two. They do a great job and get a lot of requests.

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### 2.1.2 Phone

650-261-6665

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### 2.1.3 Hours

You usually drop off the cat 8-9am and pick up 3-5.

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### 2.1.4 Days

Typically PFOF does one clinic every 1.5 months on a Sunday.

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### 2.1.5 Web Page

<http://www.peninsulafixourferals.org/>

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### 2.1.6 Cost

Free, they ask for a \$15 donation. The cat will be

- Spayed (females) or neutered (males). Females will have sutures; males will not have sutures.

- Vaccinated for rabies, panleukopenia and upper respiratory disease.
- Have a small notch put into their right ear, to tell you and others that they have already been fixed and have a caretaker.
- Treated for parasites, minor wounds, abscesses, and infected teeth.
- Groomed and given a dose of Advantage to rid them of fleas.
- For an additional donation request of \$15 to cover our costs, your cat(s) can be microchipped. Let them know if you would like this service.

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### **2.1.7 Address**

Next clinic is scheduled for October 2, 2005, in Santa Clara, probably at the

Humane Society Silicon Valley: 2530 Lafayette Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050. The clinic door is on the side - it's not the main entrance to the shelter.

FUTURE CLINIC DATES in 2005: Oct 2, Dec 4.

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## 2.2 Palo Alto Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic

I use this clinic a lot.

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### 2.2.1 Appointments

They do not take feral appointments. You must call them at 650/496-5960 at exactly 6am to see if you can get your feral in that day.

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### 2.2.2 Phone

650/496-5960 6am-11am -- this is the number you call at 6am to get your feral in

650/496-5933 11am-5pm -- this is an information number -- ask for Anon, he is the feral clinic person most knowledgeable about their feral cat program.

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### 2.2.3 Hours

Drop the cat off 6am-7am. Remember - you need to call them at 650/496-5960 at 6am to see if they have time to fix your feral. They do not want you to just show up with a cat.

Pick cat up 3-5.

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### 2.2.4 Days

Plan on Monday-Thursday for ferals.

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### 2.2.5 Web Page

<http://www.papd.org/animal/index.html>

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### 2.2.6 Cost

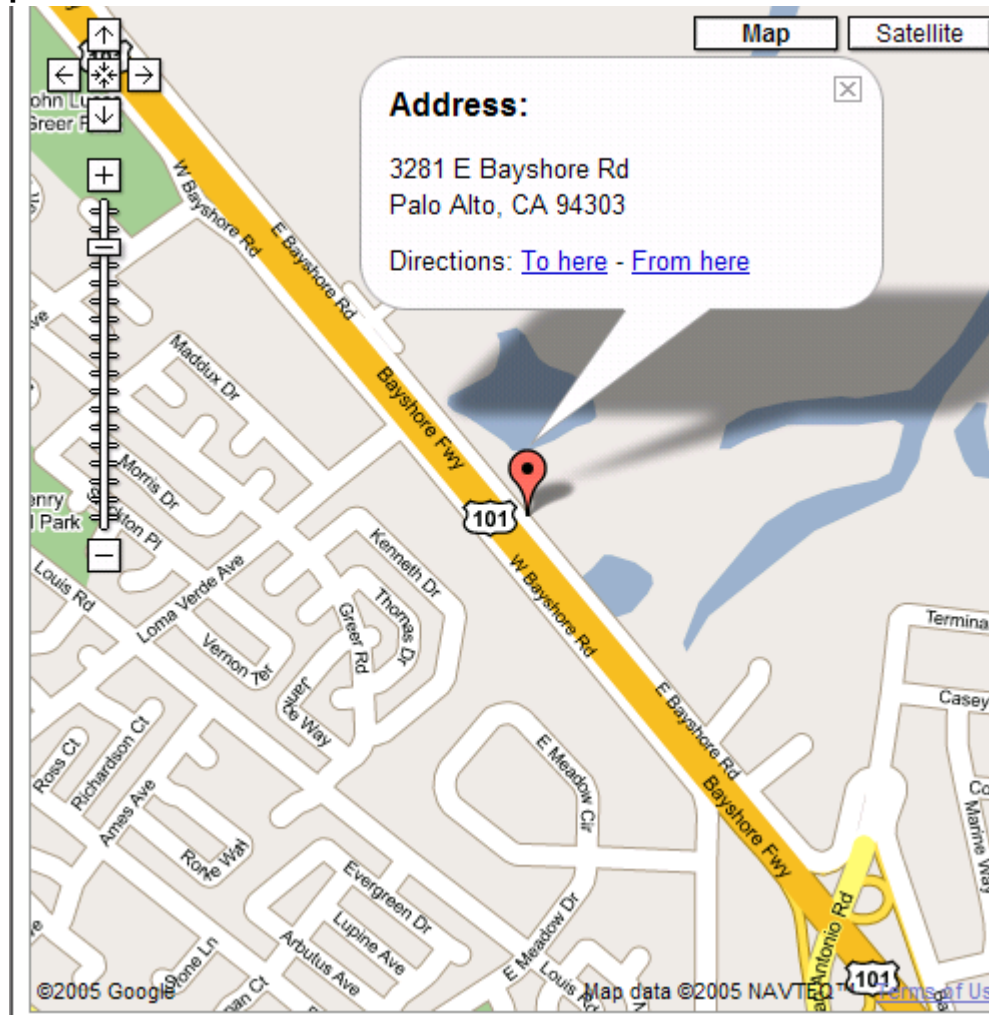
As of September 22 2005, they had funding for the \$10 feral cat program (they fix, vaccinate, and ear notch for \$10). When you bring the cat in, ask for the \$10 coupon first thing so they know what paperwork to do on the cat. Always check with them about current funding status.

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### 2.2.7 Address

3281 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, Ca

## 2.2.8 Map



Clinics that Fix Feral Cats: Palo Alto Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic

**Important:** Always call the clinic to confirm cost/etc because processes/policies often change.

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## 2.3 Humane Society Silicon Valley

I use this clinic as a backup. Others in SVFF use it a lot.

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### 2.3.1 Appointments

They do make appointments for feral cats. Call (408) 727-3383. ext. 827 or fill out an online form at

[http://www.hssv.org/SERVICE/CLINIC/spay\\_neuter\\_form.htm](http://www.hssv.org/SERVICE/CLINIC/spay_neuter_form.htm)

If you do not trap your cat, call them let them know, this will free a space up for someone who has a cat, but no appointment. It's OK to cancel.

Also, you can try to get in without an appointment by showing up Monday - Wednesday -Friday at exactly 6:30am with your cat in a trap. They may have room to fix your cat. Do not go Tues, Thur, Saturday, or Sunday - they do not fix cats on those days.

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### 2.3.2 Phone

408-727-3383 -- general information number

(408) 727-3383. ext. 827 for clinic

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### 2.3.3 Hours/Days

Drop cat off 6:30am-8am; Pick cat up 3-5.

Monday - Wednesday - Friday. Do not go Tues, Thur, Saturday, or Sunday - they do not fix cats on those days.

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### 2.3.4 Web Page

[http://www.hssv.org/SERVICE/CLINIC/spay\\_neuter.htm](http://www.hssv.org/SERVICE/CLINIC/spay_neuter.htm)

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### 2.3.5 Cost

As of September 22 2005, they had funding for the \$10 feral cat program (they fix, vaccinate, and ear notch for \$10). When you bring the cat in, ask for the \$10 coupon first thing so they know what paperwork to do on the cat. Always check with them about current funding status. September 2005 Note: they ask for a \$20 deposit for spay/neuter - this applies only to owned cats - not feral/stray cats.



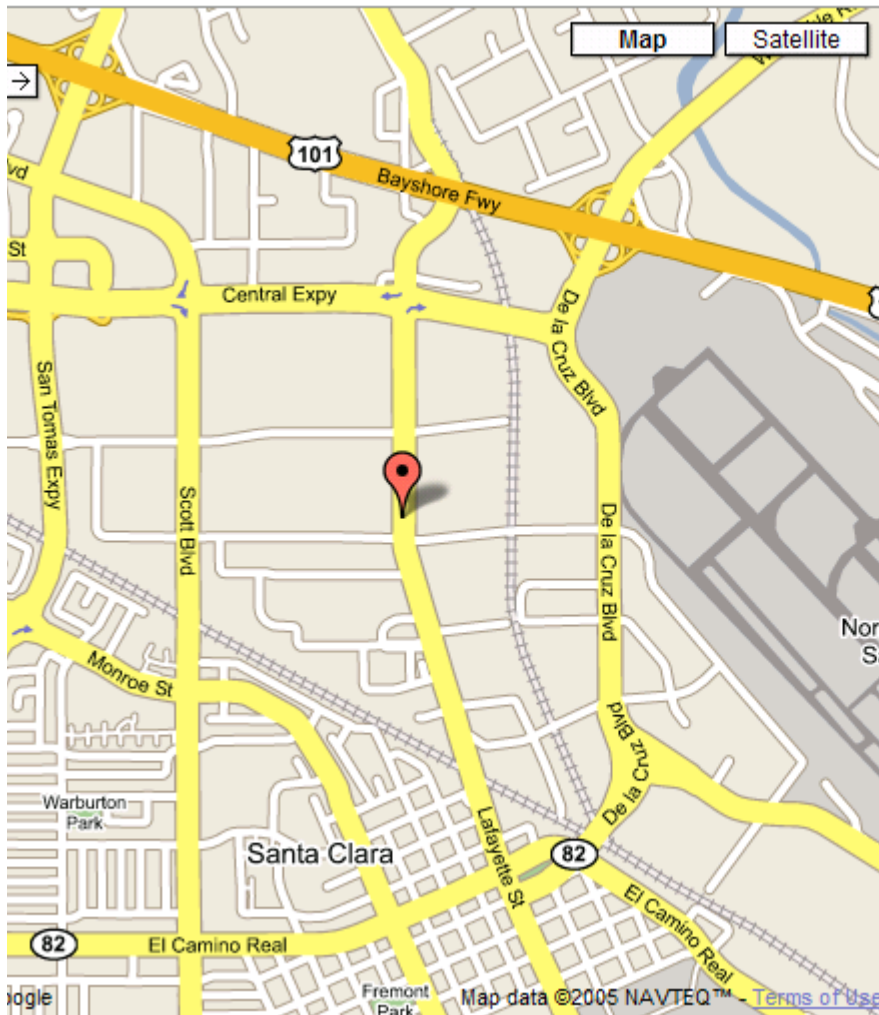
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### 2.3.6 Address


2530 Lafayette Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050. The clinic door is on the side - it's not the main entrance to the shelter

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### 2.3.7 Map



[Print](#) [Email](#) [Link](#)

 2530 Lafayette St  
Santa Clara, CA 95

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## 2.4 Peninsula Humane Society (PHS)

I use this clinic as a backup. It's a little far to go for most of us, but nice to have available if you can't get into Palo Alto or the Humane Society Silicon Valley.

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### 2.4.1 Appointments

They fix ferals M-F and you don't need an appointment -- just be there at 7:00am with your cat in a trap.

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### 2.4.2 Phone

650.340.7022 -- general info

650-340-7025 -- spay/neuter clinic

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### 2.4.3 Hours

Drop cat off 8am-9am.

Pick cat up 3-5.

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### 2.4.4 Days

Monday - Friday.

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### 2.4.5 Web Page

<http://www.peninsulahumanesociety.org/>

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### 2.4.6 Cost

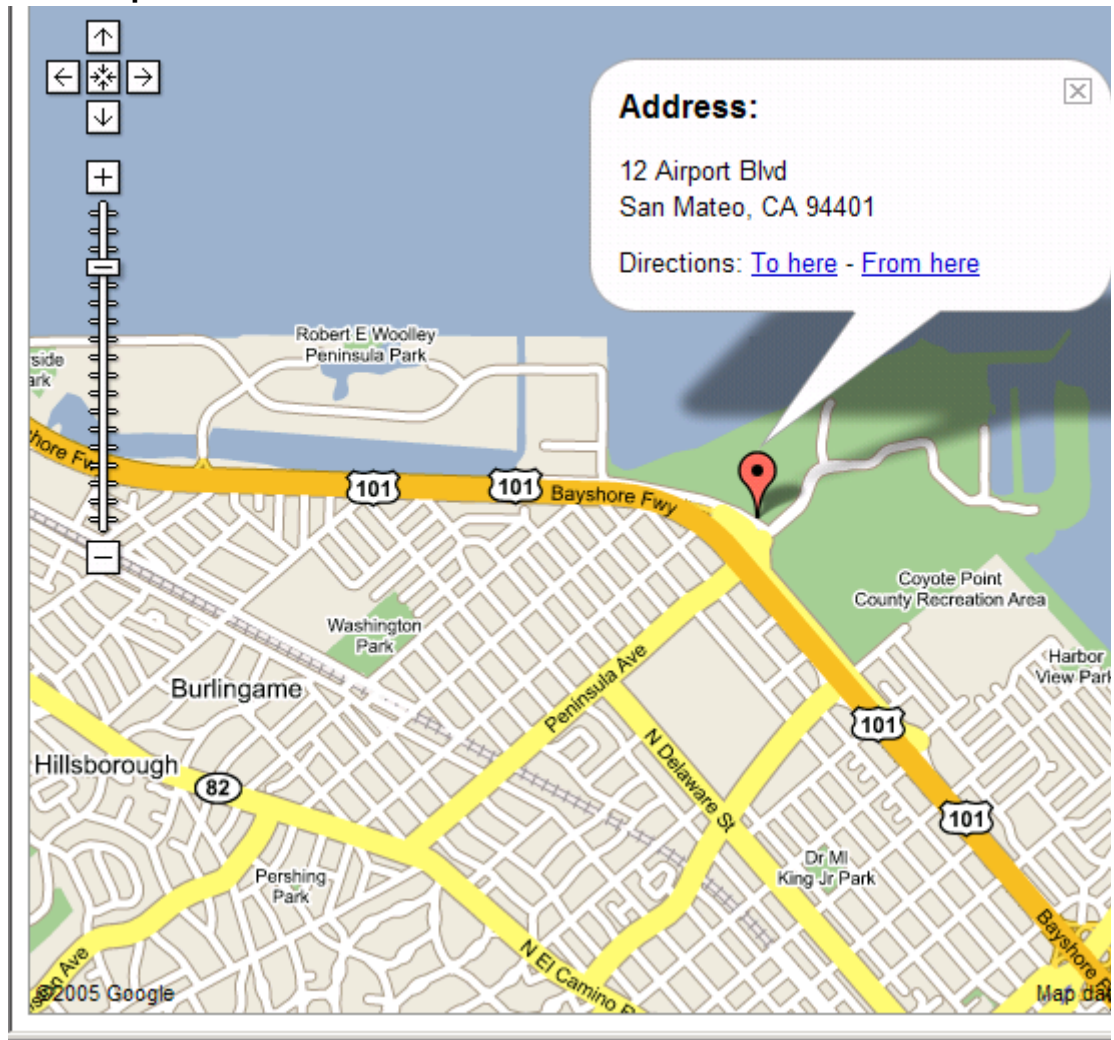
No \$10 coupon. Your cost is \$45 for spay or neuter and includes vaccinations.

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### 2.4.7 Address

12 Airport Boulevard, San Mateo, CA 94401

## 2.4.8 Map



Clinics that Fix Feral Cats: Peninsula Humane Society (PHS)

19

**Important:** Always call the clinic to confirm cost/etc because processes/policies often change.

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## 2.5 Animal Medical Clinic (AMC)

Dr. D.S. Saini

Note: this clinic may offer two \$10 feral cat programs

- San Jose Animal Control \$10 feral cat program residents, please ask for the \$10 San Jose program
- Santa Clara county \$10 feral cat program

If you live in the city of San Jose, please ask for the San Jose \$10 feral cat program as your first option.

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### 2.5.1 Appointments

They make appointments for ferals M-F.

If you do not trap your cat, call them let them know, this will free a space up for someone who has a cat, but no appointment. It's OK to cancel.

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### 2.5.2 Phone

408-262-7190

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### 2.5.3 Hours

Drop cat off 8am-9am; Pick cat up 3-5.

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### 2.5.4 Days

Monday - Friday.

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### 2.5.5 Cost

As of September 22 2005, they had funding for the \$10 feral cat program (they fix, vaccinate, and ear notch for \$10). When you bring the cat in, ask for the \$10 coupon first thing so they know what paperwork to do on the cat. Always check with them about current funding status.

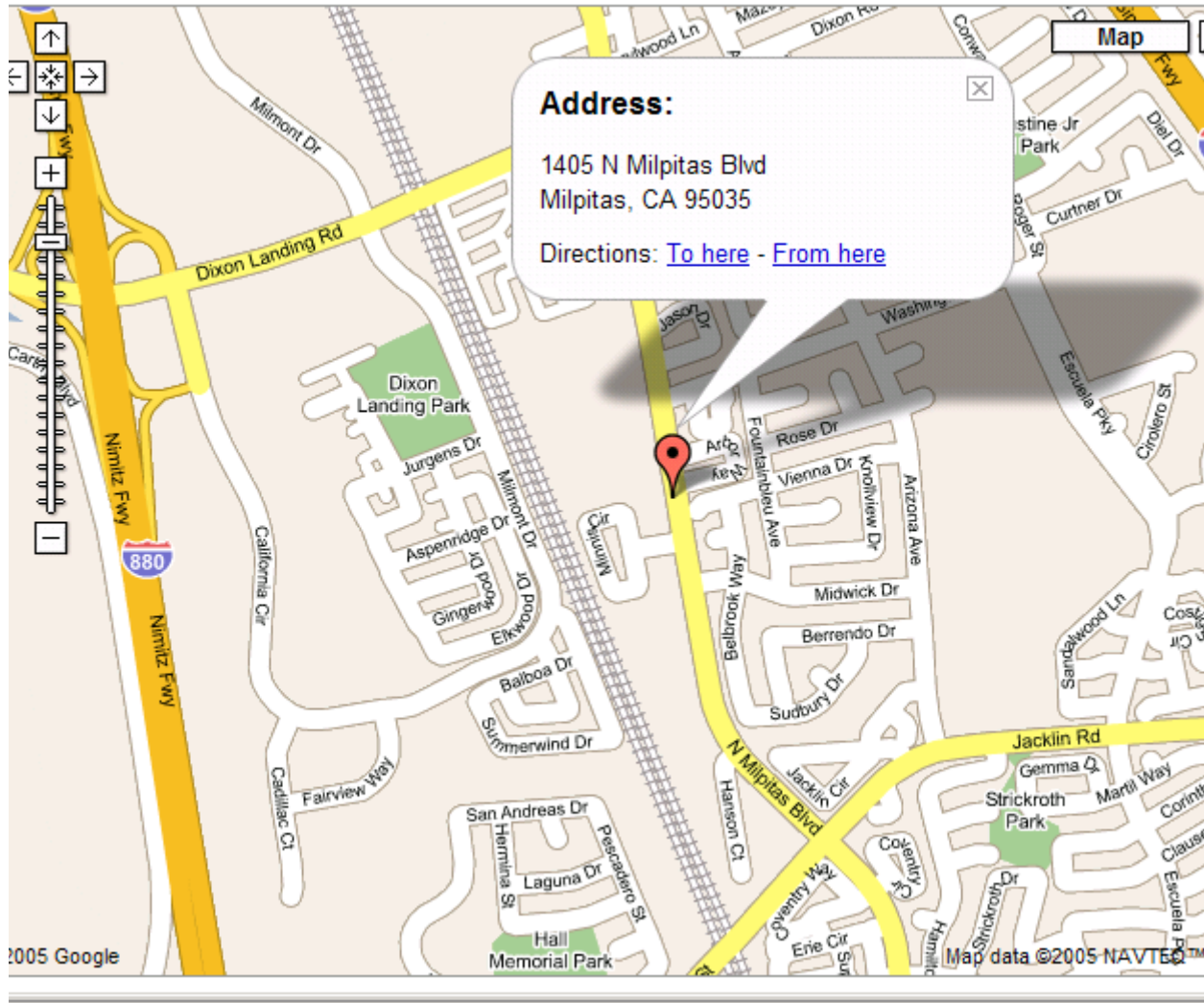
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## 2.5.6 Address

1405 North Milpitas Blvd, Milpitas, CA 95035

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## 2.5.7 Map



Clinics that Fix Feral Cats: Animal Medical Clinic (AMC)

21

**Important:** Always call the clinic to confirm cost/etc because processes/policies often change.

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## 2.6 Bay Cities Veterinary Clinic

I use this clinic as a backup. Others in SVFF use it a lot.

Note: this clinic may offer two \$10 feral cat programs

- San Jose Animal Control \$10 feral cat program residents, please ask for the \$10 San Jose program (as of Sept 22 2005, these funds are still available)
- Santa Clara county \$10 feral cat program, as of Sept 22 2005, these funds have run out.

If you live in the city of San Jose, please ask for the San Jose \$10 feral cat program as your first option.

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### 2.6.1 Appointments

They make appointments for ferals. The appointments fill up fast.

If you do not trap your cat, call them let them know, this will free a space up for someone who has a cat, but no appointment. It's OK to cancel.

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### 2.6.2 Phone

408-262-2518

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### 2.6.3 Hours

varies, Dr. Cachola works at other sites, but they do work on Saturdays.

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### 2.6.4 Days

varies, doctor works at other sites, but they do work on Saturdays.

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### 2.6.5 Cost

As of Sept 22 2005, they only had funding for the \$10 San Jose feral cat program; the \$10 Santa Clara county program funds ran out. When you bring the cat in, ask for the \$10 coupon first thing so they know what paperwork to do on the cat. Always check with them about current funding status.

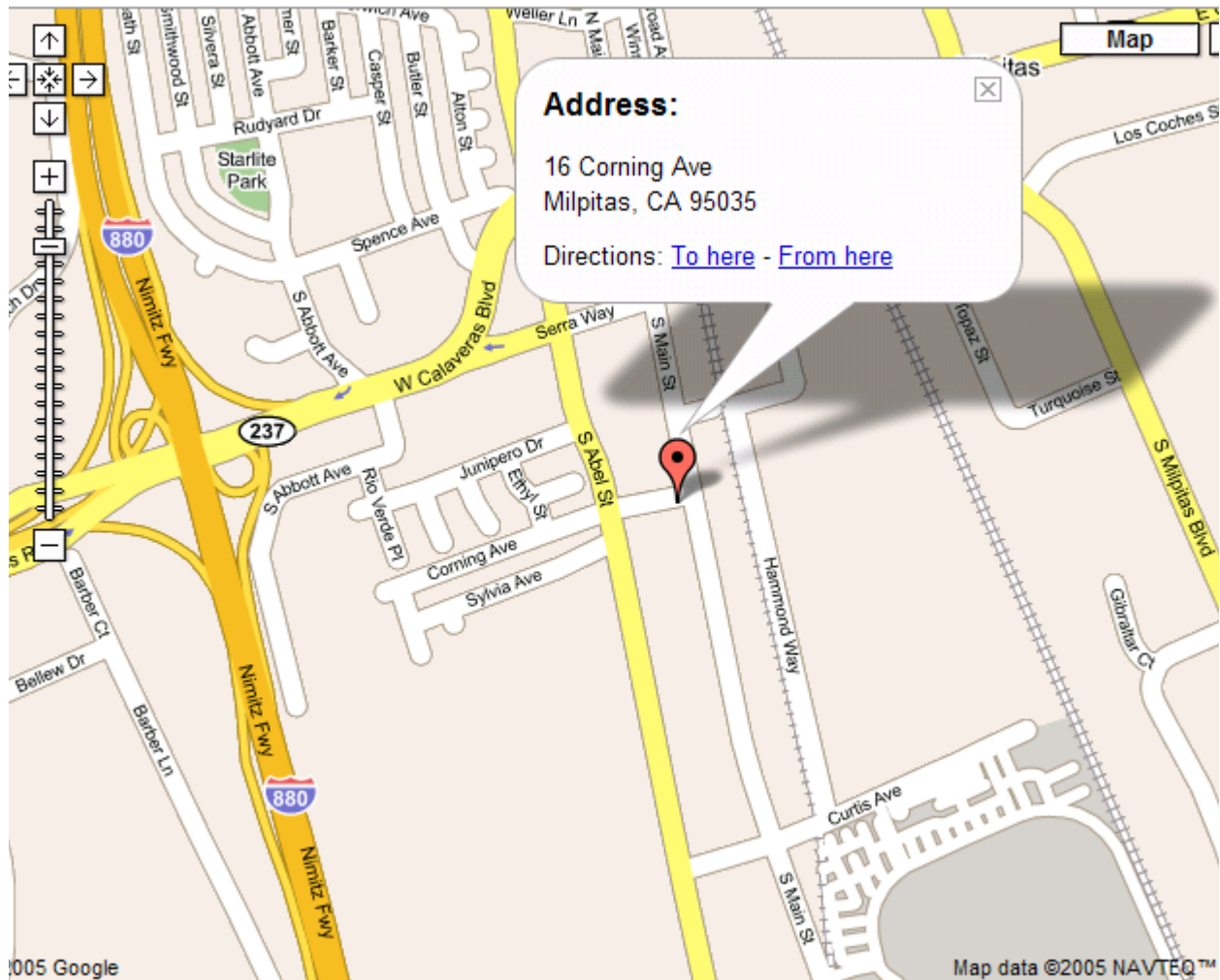
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## 2.6.6 Address

16 Corning Avenue, Milpitas, Ca

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## 2.6.7 Map



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## 2.7 Others

- Almaden Animal Clinic, 6055 Meridian Ave. ,408-927-8387\$45 Spay \$30 Neuter
- Animal Medical Center, San Jose, 267-7387
- AKAL, 940 Berryessa Road, San Jose, 408-254-2525

Clinics that Fix Feral Cats: Others

23

**Important:** Always call the clinic to confirm cost/etc because processes/policies often change.

- Lawrence Pet Hospital, 711 Lawrence Expressway, Santa Clara, CA 95050, (408) 296-3300 (Sundays only)

Also, see links on the [www.svff.org](http://www.svff.org) site and the following:

- <http://www.sanjoseanimals.com/spayNeutProg.asp#scc>
- <http://www.sccgov.org/content/0,4745,sid%253D10906%2526chid%253D14996%2526ccid%253D508732,00.html>



# 3

## Where to Rent or Buy Traps

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If you need to rent or buy a trap, go online to the *Peninsula Fix Our Ferals* (PFOF) link: <http://www.peninsulafixourferals.org/traps.html> and the *Alley Cat Allies* link: <http://www.alleycat.org/pdf/selection.pdf>.

The information below is from these sites.

All phone numbers are in the 408 area code unless otherwise specified.

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### **3.1 An-Jan Feed & Pet Supply (sales)**

1633 Monterey Rd., San Jose **293-6232**  
1109 Branham Lane, San Jose **269-5551**  
7128 Santa Teresa, So. San Jose **578-7790**  
1129 S. De Anza Blvd., Cupertino **446-3932**  
111 S. Main, Milpitas **263-1774**  
*Small: \$70; Large \$80*

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### **3.2 Butchie's Pet & Feed Supply (sales and rentals)**

2098 El Camino Real, Santa Clara **557-9104**

*Sales: \$70; Rentals: \$70 deposit, \$3/day*

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### **3.3 Evergreen Pet Center (rentals)**

1640 E. Capital Expressway, San Jose **274-2555**  
*\$100 deposit, \$1/day*

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### **3.4 For Other Living Things (rentals)**

1261 S. Mary Ave., Sunnyvale **739-6785**  
[www.forotheotherlivingthings.com](http://www.forotheotherlivingthings.com)  
*\$65 deposit, \$0.50/day*

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### **3.5 Humane Society Silicon Valley- Alpha Pet Store (rentals)**

2530 Lafayette Street, Santa Clara **727-3383 ext. 826**  
[www.hssv.org](http://www.hssv.org)  
*\$100 deposit, \$1.50/day*

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### **3.6 Palo Alto Humane Society CatWorks Program (rentals)**

[www.paloaltohumane.org](http://www.paloaltohumane.org) **(650) 961-1336**  
*Join CatWorks - Call for information*

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### **3.7 Pet Planet (rentals)**

5750 Santa Teresa, San Jose **578-5186**  
*\$75 deposit, \$3.50/day (two-day minimum)*

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### **3.8 Pet's Choice (sales and rentals)**

5180 Moorpark Ave., San Jose **996-3814**  
*Sales: \$70; Rentals: \$50 deposit, \$10 for 3 days*

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Where to Rent or Buy Traps: Evergreen Pet Center (rentals)

26

**Important:** Always call the clinic to confirm cost/etc because processes/policies often change.

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### **3.9 Pets & More (sales and rentals)**

4177 Hamilton Ave., San Jose **374-9722**

*Sales: \$70; Rental: \$100 deposit, \$3/day*

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### **3.10 Peninsula Fix Our Ferals (rentals)**

P.O. Box 7358, San Jose **410-5268** (for trap rental only)

*\$75 deposit, \$2.50/day*

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### **3.11 PETCO (rentals)**

4698 Meridian Ave., San Jose **269-2481**

*\$100 deposit, \$5/day*

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### **3.12 San Jose Animal Care & Services (rentals)**

2750 Monterey Road, San Jose **578-7297**

[www.sanjoseanimals.com/feralsTrapLoan.asp](http://www.sanjoseanimals.com/feralsTrapLoan.asp)

*\$40 deposit, no charge to rent (1 week maximum)*

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### **3.13 Sam's Downtown Feed & Pet Supply (sales and rentals)**

759 W. San Carlos St., San Jose **287-9090**

*Sales: \$63 new, \$58 used; Rental: \$63 deposit, \$5 first day, \$2 each additional day (no charge Sundays)*

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### **3.14 Animal Care & Equipment Services (sales only)**

[www.animal-care.com](http://www.animal-care.com) **1-800-338-ACES**

Offer Tru-Catch traps, see below.

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### **3.15 Tru-Catch Traps (sales only)**

Contact Heart of the Earth Marketing, a distributor of Tru-catch Traps, for complete merchandise information and the best prices on Tru-Catch traps:

- Heart of The Earth Marketing
- Phone: 800.526.1644
- Website: [www.animal-traps.com](http://www.animal-traps.com)

Model TC18 is ideal for kittens, models TC30LT-D and TC30D are for adult feral cats, and models TC36 and TC36D are good for large tomcats or recovery after surgery. The letter "D" at the end of the model designates a back door for that trap. Typically large traps with back doors are more convenient, but each size trap is available without the rear door.

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### **3.16 Tomahawk Live Trap Company (sales only)**

[www.tomahawk.com](http://www.tomahawk.com) 1-800-272-8727

We typically use the following:

- For kittens, models 103 and 603 (603 has a rear door and 103 does not). Model 103 costs about \$25.00; 603 costs about \$29.51.
- For adults, models 608 (trap has rear door). Model 608 costs about \$69.22. For adult cats, traps with rear doors are typically more convenient to use.

Prices and policies listed above were accurate as of March 1, 2005. Call establishments directly to confirm current sales and rental prices. To report changes or to add to the list, contact the PFOF Trap Rental Coordinator at (650) 261-6665.

Where to Rent or Buy Traps: Tomahawk Live Trap Company (sales only)

28

**Important:** Always call the clinic to confirm cost/etc because processes/policies often change.

# A

## Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Guidelines From the Internet

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This appendix contains Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) guidelines from various online sites:

- [“Fix Our Ferals of Berkeley” on page A-2](#)  
Fix Our Ferals (FOF) of Berkeley (<http://www.fixourferals.org/index.php?pager=trapping>)
- [“Feral Cat Coalition \(FCC\) San Diego” on page A-9](#)  
Feral Cat Coalition (FCC) San Diego, California (<http://www.feralcat.com/trapinst.html>)
- [“Alley Cat Allies” on page A-13](#)  
Alley Cat Allies (ACA) ([http://www.alleycat.org/resources\\_care.html#3](http://www.alleycat.org/resources_care.html#3))
- [“San Francisco SPCA” on page A-17](#)  
San Francisco SPCA ([http://www.sfspca.org/gifs/pdf\\_factsheets/Humane.pdf](http://www.sfspca.org/gifs/pdf_factsheets/Humane.pdf))

I provide this for those caregivers who do not have Internet access.

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## A.1 Fix Our Ferals of Berkeley

This content is from Fix Our Ferals of Berkeley  
(<http://www.fixourferals.org/index.php?pager=trapping>)

Section contents:

- [Plan Ahead](#)
- [Notify Neighbors](#)
- [Gather Equipment](#)
- [Bait and Set Traps](#)
- [Those hard-to-catch cats:](#)
- [Trap! Wait and Check, Wait and Check](#)
- [You Caught a Cat!](#)
- [To Trap or Not to Trap: The Lactating-Female Dilemma](#)
- [Capturing Kittens](#)
- [Pre-Surgery Holding Procedures](#)
- [Post-Surgical Care](#)
- [Return! Releasing the Cat](#)
- [Clean the Trap](#)

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### Plan Ahead

- If possible, get the cats used to being fed at the same place and time of day. This will then become the best trapping site and time.
- Borrow a humane trap (try Fix Our Ferals, 510-433-9446). Never store traps in the set position (door open)—animals may wander into even unbaited traps and starve.
- After obtaining a trap, **do not** leave the trap out where it could fall into the hands of someone who might be abusive toward a trapped cat.
- Prepare a safe place where you will hold the cat after trapping, for the night before surgery and for recovery after surgery.
- This space can be a garage, spare room, bathroom, or any other sheltered area that can be secured against intruders such as raccoons or people.
- Have on hand plastic to protect the floor, and absorbent newspapers to place on top of the plastic.
- Spraying the area with a cat-safe flea spray **well before** placing the cat there will discourage ants.
- Make an appointment for the surgery. Tell the vet that the cats are feral.
- Do not trap until the evening before or, at the longest, the day before the scheduled surgery, so that the cat will not spend unnecessary anxious time in the trap.

- Plan to trap at least 10 to 12 hours before surgery, so that food will not be in the cat's stomach when anesthesia is administered. Vomiting under anesthesia can cause death from choking, or, if food gets into the lungs, can result in pneumonia.
- 

### **Notify Neighbors**

- If you don't know **all** the cats in the area, notify neighbors either by talking to them or by posting a notice telling when you will be setting traps, and asking that people keep their own cats inside.
  - Ask neighbors who feed outdoors to abstain from feeding on the entire day you plan to trap. Of course, you shouldn't feed either. (After you have finished trapping, do leave food for the cats who were not caught.)
- 

### **Gather Equipment**

- Humane traps
  - Cloth covers for the traps (large enough to cover top, sides, and ends)
  - Newspaper and/or cardboard
  - Plastic to protect the car
  - Smelly food (e.g., canned fish-and-shrimp)
  - Spoon or fork
  - Can opener, if needed for the food
  - Towels for your hands
  - Flashlight
  - Wire-cutters (in case an opossum gets his snout caught—it's happened!)
- 

### **Bait and Set Traps**

- Plan to set traps just before or at the cats' normal feeding time. This is often at dusk. Don't trap in the rain or on a hot day without adequate protection for the traps. Cats are vulnerable in the traps, so use common sense.
- Fold a piece of newspaper or cut cardboard to line the bottom of the trap: some cats don't like walking on the wire surface.
- **Test** to make sure the liner doesn't interfere with the tripping mechanism or prevent the door from closing properly. (On windy days, flapping newspaper may scare cats away. Clothespins or small paper clamps will keep the paper still.)
- Be sure the trap is placed on a level surface. A wobbly trap can scare the cat or spring the trap before the cat is completely inside. A cat who has escaped a sprung trap is likely to be extremely trap-shy afterwards.

- If you are trapping in a public area, try to place traps where they cannot be noticed by passersby, so that no one will disturb the process, misunderstand your intentions, or steal your traps. Bushes or other camouflage will also make the cat feel more trusting of the trap.
- Leaves and vines from the cat's environment can be woven into the wire of the trap to make a hard-to-trap cat let down her or his guard enough to enter the trap.
- Do not use bowls in the trap; they could flip up and injure the cat if he or she struggles. Instead, place the food directly on the newspaper or cardboard.
- Some trappers spoon a small amount of food onto a scrap of newspaper on the ground where the rear of the trap will be placed. Press the rear of the trap (area behind the trip plate) down onto the food so that the foods squishes up through the wire. The cat will probably step on the trip plate as he/she works at getting the food.
- Dribbling bits of food or juice in a trail from the front of the trap to the back may entice the cat into the trap.
- After you've baited the trap, make sure the back door of a Tomahawk trap is **securely latched**: pull the tongue up over the wire loop and fasten the clip outside the tongue.
- To set the front door of a Tomahawk trap, push the top of the door in and pull the bottom of the door upward. The small hook attached to the right side of the trap hooks onto a tiny metal cylinder on the right side of the door. The open door raises the trip plate. When the cat steps on the plate, the door will pull free of the hook and the trap will close.
- Optional: Cover the trap with a large towel or piece of towel-sized material **when you set the trap**, leaving the open end of the trap exposed. The cover will help to camouflage the trap, and, even more important, will serve to calm the cat after it is caught, so that she or he is less likely to sustain injuries from struggling to escape.

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### Those hard-to-catch cats:

- If the feeding site is secure enough that the trap will not be stolen, you can leave the trap **unset** (remove the back door entirely, or wire open the hinged door) during a few routine feedings, so the cat gets used to seeing and smelling the trap.
- At first, place the food near the trap, then just outside the open door. After each successful feeding, move the food a few inches further into the trap, until the cat is comfortable eating at the far inner end of the trap. Then you can be confident that when the trap is set, the cat will go in.

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### Trap! Wait and Check, Wait and Check

- When you have set a trap, stay far enough away to escape notice by the cat, but stay within sight of the trap or within hearing distance of the trap door springing shut. **Never leave traps unattended.** The trapped animal is vulnerable: raccoons or dogs could attack it, or a passerby could release or harm the cat or steal the trap.
- At night, use a flashlight to check from a distance whether the trap has been sprung. When one does spring shut, a flashlight will let you see what animal you have trapped.
- Even if you haven't heard a trap shut, check the traps at least every 30 to 45 minutes.



- If you have chosen not to cover the trap when you set it (some people think a cover will arouse the cat's suspicions), always take your trap cover when you check the trap, so that you can cover the trapped cat immediately.

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### You Caught a Cat!

- As soon as the cat is trapped, completely cover the top and sides of the trap and take that trap to your vehicle, so that the sounds of the trapped cat won't scare others you hope to catch that night.
- If you hope to trap additional cats, dispose of any food left on the ground, so that the others will remain hungry enough to be trapped.
- Inspect the cat you have trapped. Remove the captured, totally covered cat to a quiet area and lift the cover to check for signs that the animal is not a pet or a previously altered feral. In the East Bay, the right ear either with a triangular notch or tipped (the tip of the ear cut off in a straight line) signifies that the cat has already been sterilized. (If you're not sure, be sure to alert the vet of this possibility, so a spay scar can be searched for before opening.)
- **Important:** Check to see whether you have caught a lactating female (see [below](#)).
- After you have inspected the cat, cover the trap again. An uncovered cat may get hurt in his or her attempts to escape.
- There is always a chance you will catch some other animal—raccoon, opossum, skunk. Simply release the animal quietly, and in the same spot it was trapped, to prevent disorientation.
- If you catch a different cat from the one you hoped to get, still, if the cat is feral and not altered, do sterilize that one. A trapped cat learns from the experience, making trapping that cat again often difficult, sometimes impossible.

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### To Trap or Not to Trap: The Lactating-Female Dilemma

- **Never** knowingly trap a mother with kittens younger than 4 to 6 weeks unless you are sure you can find and bottle-feed her kittens, as these kittens will be too young to eat on their own.
- Especially in spring and summer, whenever you do trap a cat, lift the trap and try to check the cat's belly. If the nipples are enlarged, pinkish, and surrounded by a 1/4 inch circle clear of fur or with matted fur, she may be nursing kittens.
- If you suspect that the cat is lactating, ask the veterinarian to verify.
- Make every effort not to leave kittens outside alone after you have trapped the mother. **They may die** of starvation or predators while she is away. While the cat is at the vet's, check the trapping area for crying or hidden kittens.
  - If they are under 4 weeks old, you may be able to capture them fairly easily. Buy Kitten Milk Replacement (KMR) and a bottle and feed them until the mother has recovered from her surgery. (For information on how to care for neonatal kittens, please go to [www.feralcat.com/raising.html](http://www.feralcat.com/raising.html) and [www.kittenrescue.org/handbook.htm](http://www.kittenrescue.org/handbook.htm)) She can then be placed back with her kittens in a large cage or small room until the kittens are old enough to eat on their own (and be spayed or neutered themselves, of course).

- If you are not able to rescue the kittens, let the vet know you will need to pick up the cat and release her that same day. That evening, as soon as she is awake and alert, release her exactly where you trapped her.

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### **Capturing Kittens**

- Females with kittens will be attracted by the sound of their kittens, if the previously captured kittens are placed in a covered carrier just behind the trap. Similarly, kittens will be easier to trap if the previously captured mom is left, covered, with a second trap placed beside her.
- However, be sure never to leave the "bait" animal unattended, or where it may be harmed by other predators, such as raccoons, or by people.
- Be careful not to let the "bait" cat escape: double-check the trap doors.

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### **Pre-Surgery Holding Procedures**

- After you have trapped, you will probably have to hold the cats overnight before you take them to the vet. Place cats in the prepared, protected area. Don't feed within 12 hours of surgery; if there is food in the trap, drag it out with a stick. However, water should be made available.
- For the cats' safety, always clean and care for trapped cats in a closed room. If any cats slip out of the cages, it will be crucial that they remain in a small space, where you can retrap them.
- You can slide clean newspaper in from either end of the trap. If you prefer cardboard, slide the clean piece under the dirty one, then remove the used cardboard.
- To give the cat water, open the door a couple of inches and scoot a small container just inside the door. An empty cat-food or tuna can makes a good, stable water bowl. Remember to remove the water container before taking the cat to the vet.
- Keep the cats covered and check them periodically. Most cats will remain very quiet as long as they are covered.
- Never stick a finger in the trap or allow children or pets near them. Trapped, frightened cats are likely to scratch and bite.
- Change your clothes and wash your hands before touching your own pets, to reduce the risk of spreading disease.
- Always isolate feral kittens and have them examined by a vet before allowing contact with your pets, even if they seem perfectly healthy.
- **Double-check all doors** of the trap or carrier before moving the cat.

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### **Post-Surgical Care**

- The usual holding periods for recovery from surgery are:
  - Males: minimum 24 hours before release
  - Females: 3 days before release
  - Pregnant females: 5 days, or the period recommended by the attending vet
  - Lactating females with uncaptured kittens: need to be released as soon as they are fully awake (see [above](#))

- Cats with infections (e.g., abscesses) usually need antibiotics for a week.
- For the longer periods, try to borrow a cage larger than the trap, or wire two traps together, so that the cat can be a bit more comfortable.
  - Cage transfers are a two-person job.
  - Always transfer the cat from the trap to a cage in an enclosed room.
  - Match the back door of the trap with the cage door, covering any open space with cardboard or plywood.
  - Cover both the trap the cat is in and the cage you want the cat to enter. Then slowly uncover the trap. The cat will want to move from a vulnerable space to a dark secure one.
  - When the cat has moved into the cage, make sure to block the door with the cardboard until the last moment before shutting it.
- Water should be offered the same night as the surgery, if the cat seems alert.
- Kittens, who could become hypoglycemic, should be given food the same night as their surgery, as soon as they seem alert.
- Adult cats should be offered food the morning after surgery.
  - Some cats will eat the food as soon as it's offered; others may have had a more difficult surgery or may be too frightened to eat.
  - If the cat will not eat food by the end of the day following surgery, tempt him or her with exquisite cuisine: people food such as tuna or chicken (no bones, please). Some need a jump-start to regain appetite.
- If a cat does not seem to be recovering well from the surgery, please consider having a vet check before release.

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### **Return! Releasing the Cat**

- When cats are ready for release, release them in the same place they were captured, to avoid disorientation.
- **DO NOT RELOCATE THE ANIMALS!** Relocation without proper acclimation procedures removes the cats from their known food source. Other cats will defend their turf by driving off newcomers, and thus the abruptly relocated cats will most likely starve.
- The best time for release is dusk or very early morning, when fewer people are around and darkness provides cover for the cat.
- Keep the trap covered until you are ready to release.
- Make sure the spot you pick for release does not encourage the cat to run into danger (such as a busy street) to get away from you. Point the opening into foliage or a good hiding place.

- Set the trap down and lift a corner of the cover to let the cat can get his or her bearings for a few moments. Don't remove the cover completely, or the cat may ram into the cage, thinking it is open.
- With the door facing away from you, simply open the door and move away.

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### **Clean the Trap**

When the cat has left the area, take the trap home. Clean it thoroughly, using disinfectant, to avoid spreading disease between colonies.

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## A.2 Feral Cat Coalition (FCC) San Diego

This content is from the Feral Cat Coalition (FCC) San Diego, California (<http://www.feralcat.com/trapinst.html>)

Section contents:

- [Preparation for trapping](#)
- [Setting the traps](#)
- [Waiting for success](#)
- [Holding procedures](#)
- [Releasing the cats](#)
- [Helpful hints](#)

These instructions assume that you are using traps from the [Tomahawk Live Trap Company](#). Specifics regarding the traps may be slightly different if you are using another type of trap. Make arrangements with the vet in advance of trapping. Be sure to tell the vet to use stitches which will dissolve, or do not need removal, and that the animal is wild.

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### Preparation for trapping

If possible, get the cats used to being fed at the same place and time of day. You might try leaving the trap **unset** and covered with a large towel during routine feeding so that the animal will get used to seeing and smelling it in the area. Don't feed the cats the day/night before you are going to trap so the cats will be hungry. Be sure to notify others who may feed the cats not to leave food out either.

Plan to trap so that you don't have to keep the cat too long before surgery. Trapping the night before is usually the best approach. Cats should not eat 12 hours prior to surgery.

Prepare the area where you will be holding the cats before and after the clinic. A garage or other sheltered, warm, protected area is best. Lay down newspapers to catch the inevitable stool, urine and food residue. You may want to use pieces of wood to elevate the traps off the newspapers. This allows the mess to fall through the wire away from the cats. Spraying the area ahead of time with a cat-safe flea spray (like Adams or Ovitrol) will discourage ants.

Prepare the vehicle you will use to transport them as well. Plastic may be an additional precaution. But remember that you will need to use newspapers or some other absorbent material in addition. ( Urine will roll right off of the plastic and that isn't what you want )

Plan your day of trapping carefully. Remember that if you trap an animal and release it for some reason, it is unlikely that you will be able to catch it again....they learn very quickly.

If there are young kittens involved, remember that they should not be weaned from the mother before 4-6 weeks of age. If you are trapping a lactating female, you may want to wait until you have located the kittens and they are old enough to wean. If you wish to tame and foster the kittens to adopt out, they should be taken from the mother at 4-6 weeks. If you wait until the kittens are older than 4-6 weeks before trying to tame them you will find the job progressively harder with age.

---

### Setting the traps

Plan to set traps just before or at the cats' normal feeding time. This is often at night. Dusk is usually the best time to set traps.

Don't trap in the rain or the heat of day without adequate protection for the trap. Cats are vulnerable in the traps and could drown during storms or suffer from heatstroke in the sun. Use common sense!

Fold a piece of newspaper to line the bottom of the trap just covering the trip plate. Cats don't like walking on the wire surface and the paper helps to keep their feet from going through when you pick up the trap. Be sure that the paper does not extend beyond the trip plate. Too much newspaper can interfere with the trap mechanism or prevent the door from closing properly.

Plan placement of traps on a level surface in the area where the cats usually feed or have been seen. Cats are less likely to enter the trap if it wobbles. If trapping in a public area, try to place traps where they will not be noticed by passersby (who may not understand that you are not trying to harm the cat). Bushes are often places where cats hide and provide good camouflage for the trap.

Use smelly food to bait the trap. We find that canned Mackerel is very effective and relatively inexpensive. It is best not to put any bowls inside the trap to hold food since the animal can easily hurt itself on it in a panic or while recovering from anesthetic.

Soak a small scrap of newspaper (2-3 inches by 3-4 inches) in the Mackerel juice and place it on the ground where you plan to place the rear of the trap.

Spoon a small amount of food onto the soaked newspaper scrap and place the trap on top of the food so the food is as far back in the trap as possible while still not accessible from outside the trap. (You want the cat to go all the way into the trap to avoid being injured when the trap door closes.) Press the trap down onto the food so that it squishes up through the wire. The idea is to make the food a little hard to get so that the cat has to go into the trap as far as possible and has to work at getting it long enough to trip the trap. (Some cats are very good at getting in and out of traps without getting caught. We don't want to make it too easy for them to get away with that trick. Also, having the food essentially outside of the trap prevents the cat from eating it in the trap before surgery and is less messy.)

After baiting the trap, open the trap door by pushing the top of the door in and pulling the bottom of the door upward. There is a small hook attached to the right side of the trap top. It hooks onto a tiny metal cylinder on the right side of the door. The hook holds the door in an open position which also raises the trip plate. When the cat steps on the plate it will cause the hook to release the door and close the trap.

After setting the trap, cover it with a large towel or piece of towel-sized material. Fold the material at the front end of the trap to expose the opening while still covering the top, sides and back of the trap. The cover will help to camouflage the trap and serve to calm the cat after it is caught.

Just before you are ready to leave the trap for the cat to enter, you may want to push the hook (ever so slightly) a little bit back off the cylinder to create a "hair trigger". (Don't get too carried away with this step or the trap will trip as soon as the cat takes a sniff!)

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### Waiting for success

Never leave traps unattended in an unprotected area, but don't hang around within sight of the cat (or you will scare it off). The trapped animal is vulnerable. Passersby may release the cat or steal the trap! Wait quietly in an area where you can still see the traps without disturbing the cats. Check traps every 15 minutes or so. You can often hear the traps trip and see the cloth cover droop down slightly over the opening from a distance. As soon as the intended cat is trapped completely cover the trap and remove the trap from the area if other cats are not in sight. You may consider putting another trap in the same spot if it seems to be a "hot" one. Be sure to dispose of the food left on the ground when you pick up the trap. (You don't want to litter or give out any freebies and spoil any appetites!)

When you get the captured cat to a quiet area away from the other traps lift the cover and check for signs that you have the correct animal and not a pet or previously neutered feral. (The FCC marks the right ear of every animal we alter so we can avoid repeat animals) If you note that you have captured a lactating female check the area for kittens and remember that this female must be released 10-12 hours after surgery so she can care for and nurse her kittens. Cover the cat back up as soon as possible. Uncovered, the animal may panic and hurt itself thrashing around in the trap.

Of course, there is always the chance that you will catch some other wild animal attracted to the food or an unintended cat. Simply release the animal quietly as stated in the releasing procedures here.

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### Holding procedures

After you have finished trapping, you will probably have to hold the cats overnight until you can take them to the vet. (Unless you have made previous arrangements with a vet)

Place cats in the prepared protected area. Don't feed them. You can place a small bowl of water in the trap by opening the trap door just a couple of inches and placing the bowl by the trap door. Try to use a bowl that won't be tipped over easily. An empty catfood or tuna can works fairly well. Don't open the door too wide or the cat may escape. (Be sure to remove the bowl before transporting the cat to the vet.)

Keep cats covered and check periodically. They will probably be very quiet as long as they are covered. Don't stick fingers in the trap or allow children or pets near the traps. These are wild animals which scratch and bite. **ALL ANIMAL BITES ARE SERIOUS! IF YOU ARE BITTEN SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION AND DO NOT RELEASE THE CAT. IT MUST BE QUARANTINED. CONTACT YOUR VET FOR QUARANTINE INSTRUCTIONS.**

Wash and change clothes before having contact with your own pets as a precaution against spreading any contagious diseases the cats might carry.

Always get feral kittens checked out by a vet and isolate them from your pets. Some deadly diseases can incubate without symptoms. Check with your veterinarian and use caution.

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## Releasing the cats

If a cat does not seem to be recovering well from the surgery, consider having it checked out by a vet before releasing. When cats are ready for release, return to the area in which they were captured and release them there. Do not relocate the animal! It will be disoriented and most likely die. In all likelihood, area cats will drive it away.

If the veterinarian has indicated a serious medical problem with the cat which you will not be able to treat, you, with the advice of the vet, must make the decision on whether it is safe to release the animal or kinder to euthanize it. Untreated abscesses and respiratory infections, and a number of other conditions, can mean suffering and a slow death.

Make sure the spot you pick for release does not encourage the cat to run into danger (like a busy street) to get away from you. Keep the trap covered until you are ready to release. When ready, simply hold the trap with the door facing **away** from you and open the door. The cat will probably bolt immediately out of the trap. If it is confused, just tilt the trap so the back is slightly up and tap on the back of the trap to encourage it to leave. Never put your hand in the trap! If the animal still will not leave, prop the door open with a stick and leave it for a while. A trapped skunk or possum, which is nocturnal, may decide to sleep in the trap all day and not leave the trap until dark.

After releasing the cats hose off traps and disinfect them with bleach. Never store traps in the "set" position (door open); animals may wander into even unbaited traps and starve to death.

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## Helpful hints

- Bring a flashlight with you if trapping at night. It will come in handy for checking traps from a distance and might help you avoid a twisted ankle in the dark.
- Bring a cap for the top of the Mackerel can. Nothing smells worse than fish juice spilled in the car. Don't forget a spoon!
- Females with kittens will be attracted by the sound of their kittens if the previously captured kittens are placed in a covered carrier just behind the trap. Similarly, kittens will be easier to trap if the previously captured mom is in the carrier. Females in heat can be placed in a carrier to attract male cats who have been eluding the traps. Never place the "bait" animal in the trap or anywhere where it may be harmed by the trapped animal. Even moms can hurt their babies if frightened enough. Be careful not to let the "bait" animal escape.
- Some kittens can be caught without a trap but are still too wild to be handled easily. Use a thick towel to pick up the kitten to help protect you from scratching and biting. This also helps prevent the kitten from squirming away from you.



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### A.3 Alley Cat Allies

This content is from Alley Cat Allies (ACA) ([http://www.alleycat.org/resources\\_care.html#3](http://www.alleycat.org/resources_care.html#3))

In the TNR process, trapping feral cats, in order to have them sterilized and vaccinated is the first and most important step in a humane, nonlethal management plan for the feral cats that you feed. While trapping may seem intimidating, following the steps Alley Cat Allies has provided will help make your efforts successful.

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#### **Before You Trap**

We recommend that you establish a routine feeding schedule. Feed the cats at the same time and place each day for at least one week prior to trapping.

You should assess the cat(s) you are trying to trap. Determine if some cats are tame (friendly) and can be adopted into homes. Decide how you will handle kittens you trap. Use the Alley Cat Allies tracking sheet to give each cat in the colony a name and document his or her features. This information will help you with the veterinary records as you begin your TNR program. Create a sign stating "RESCUE IN PROGRESS— DO NOT REMOVE," and attach a copy to each trap. Insert the sign into a plastic freezer bag, or other protective cover before placing on the trap so that it will be readable even in wet weather.

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#### **Supplies**

In order to trap effectively you will need the following:

- One humane box trap per cat. You will be more successful if you trap as many cats as possible in the first trapping session. You may also space
- out your traps by using a specially designed wire sided transfer cage, designed to fit with a humane box trap, so that there is no risk of the cat escaping as she moves into the transfer cage;
- A can of tuna in oil, sardines in oil, mackerel, or other enticing bait;
- Newspaper to line the bottom of each trap;
- A large towel or cloth for each trap or transfer cage, large enough to cover the entire trap on all sides. Before a cat has been trapped cover the trap's top and sides. This will calm the cat and lessen the risk of injury once it is inside the trap.
- Lids or small containers to hold bait (optional). You may also put bait directly on the trap or newspaper;
- Flashlight. If you are trapping early in the morning or late at night, you will need the flashlight to identify the cats you have caught;
- Pens or pencils and cage slips for each cat, and masking tape to attach cage slips to each trap;
- Tracking sheet to ID cats and to record information;
- Spoons or a scoop for the bait, and a can opener if you need one;

- Extra cat food and clean water to leave after you trap for any cats you have already TNR'ed or were unable to trap this time;
  - Tools such as pliers, a pocketknife, and some WD40 for traps that might not work properly. Always check traps prior to arriving at trapping site;
  - And, hand sanitizer, jug of water, and gloves for your protection.
- 

## **Withhold Food**

You must withhold all food from the cats you intend to trap 24 hours before trapping. This will ensure that the cats are hungry enough to enter the traps. Also, surgery will be easier on the cats if they have not eaten for the past 24 hours.

While this may be hard, particularly if the cats appear hungry, remember you are doing what is best for them. Continue to provide the cats with clean, fresh drinking water.

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## **Start Trapping**

To begin, prepare the traps near your vehicle or away from the trapping site. Place the trap on a flat surface as you bait and set it. Do this so that if a trap does not properly work or goes off too easily it will not scare off the cats.

Unlatch the rear door and take it off so you can get your hands inside the trap. Be sure to relock the rear door before trapping. If your trap does not have a rear door then secure the front door open with a twist tie so that it won't keep falling shut while you work.

If you use newspaper, fold it lengthwise and place it inside the bottom of the trap, to disguise the wires on the bottom of the trap. Do not use newspaper if it is windy. Place approximately one tablespoon of bait along the very back of the trap. You can use a lid or container for this if you wish. Now drizzle some juice from the bait along the trap towards the entrance in a zigzag pattern. Place about one-fourth teaspoon of bait in the middle of the trap on the trip-plate, and one-fourth teaspoon about six inches inside the front of the trap. The cat will move his or her paws trying to get the zigzagged bait, thus springing the trap. It is important not to leave too much bait in the front or middle; this may satisfy the cat and she will leave without setting off the trap.

Now take the traps to the trapping site, near the feeding area. Place the trap on the ground and make certain it is stable and will not rock or tip.

If you are using multiple traps, stagger them, and place them facing in different directions. Try to think like a cat and place the trap where it will be tempting. Move quietly and slowly, and try to remain relaxed so your mannerisms will not frighten cats away.

Set and cover the traps. Leave the area quietly. The cats are unlikely to enter the traps if you are standing nearby. You may want to go sit in your car or take a walk for a while. If you are trapping in your yard you can go inside.

Traps should never be left unattended for more than two hours under any circumstances. It is preferable to quietly check the traps more frequently from a distance. You do not want to leave a cat in the trap for too long. Also, traps may be stolen, damaged, or set off. Someone who does not understand your intentions may release a trapped cat.

Trapping a feral cat may take some time. Be patient. It may take the cat a few minutes to go into the trap. Make sure the trap is sprung, and the cat securely trapped, before you approach the trap. If you come out too soon you may frighten the cat away.

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### **Special Trapping Tips**

If certain cats will not go into the traps, try feeding them in unset traps for several days before trapping. Feed the cats in the same place and time as always. Wire the doors to the traps open and place the food inside. The cats will see other cats eating inside the traps and will likely try it themselves. Once they become accustomed to the traps they will be easier to trap.

If you are still unable to trap a cat or if the cat has learned how to steal bait without springing the trap, consider using a drop-trap instead. Alley Cat Allies has instructions available on how to build and use a drop-trap to catch the obstinate feral cat.

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### **After Trapping**

After the cat has been caught, cover the entire trap with a towel or cloth before moving it. Covering the traps will help to keep the cats calm. It is normal for the cat to thrash around inside the trap. It is very tempting to release him but he will not hurt himself if the trap is covered. If a cat has already hurt himself, do not release him. Most injuries from traps are very minor, such as a bruised nose, scratched paw pad, or bloody nose. The cat will calm down once the trap is covered.

If you trap a severely injured or sick cat rush him or her to the veterinary clinic.

Once you have trapped as many cats as you can, transport the cats in the traps to the veterinary hospital. If you need to hold the cats overnight, keep them in their traps and make sure they are dry and warm. They can stay in a basement or isolated room if the weather is poor. It is possible for a cat to die from hypothermia when confined in a trap outside in cold weather. A simple guideline—if it is too cold outside for you, then it is too cold for the cats. Do not leave cats in traps exposed to excessive heat or sun. After surgery, allow the cat to recover overnight in the same trap, still covered. Usually the veterinarian's staff will replace any soiled newspaper in the bottom of the trap with fresh newspaper. If they do not do this, ask them to. Fresh newspaper will make the cats more comfortable during recovery.

Female cats usually need to be held for 24 to 48 hours after surgery. Male cats can be returned to the trapping site 12 to 24 hours following surgery as long as they are fully awake and do not require further medical attention. Make sure all cats are fully conscious and alert before release.

If the cat needs further care (longer than 48 hours) you will need to transfer her into a holding pen or cat playpen.

Release the cat in the same place you trapped him or her. Open the front door of the trap and pull back the cover. If the trap has a rear door, pull the door up and off, pull off the cover, then walk away. Do not be concerned if the cat hesitates a few moments before leaving. He is simply reorienting himself to his surroundings. It is not uncommon for the cat to stay away for a few days after release; he will return eventually. Keep leaving food and water out; he may eat when you are not around.

Never release the cat into a new area. If the cat needs to be relocated, please use Alley Cat Allies' factsheet Relocation: Guidelines for Safe Relocation of Feral Cats. Relocating cats without the proper steps can endanger the cat's life. She will try to return to her old home, and may become lost or attempt to cross major roads. Also, feral cats form strong bonds with other cats in their colonies. Separating a cat from her colony members and leaving her alone in a new environment will cause stress, depression, and loneliness.

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## A.4 San Francisco SPCA

The following content is from the San Francisco SPCA ([http://www.sfspca.org/gifs/pdf\\_factsheets/Humane.pdf](http://www.sfspca.org/gifs/pdf_factsheets/Humane.pdf))

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### How Humane Traps Work

A humane trap is a small wire cage with a door on one end and a trip plate on its floor. There may be a second door on the back of the trap. To set the trap, push in then lift up the front door and latch it open with the small hook above the door. The hook is connected to the trip plate, so when you press on the trip plate, the door closes.

#### Important Tips

- Understand how the trap works before you set it.
- Never leave a trap unattended.
- Once the cat is trapped, keep the trap loosely covered with a sheet or towel.
- When carrying a trapped cat, hold the trap away from your body.
- Always be sure both doors are securely latched to prevent escape.

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### Conditioning the Cat to the Trap

Some cats can be trapped immediately, but more wary cats will need to be conditioned to the trap.

To do this, feed the cats daily at the same time in the same location. Place a trap in the area you feed. Open the door of the trap and secure it open with a piece of string or wire. Put the food outside the trap, but near the open door. Each time you feed, move the food nearer, then into the trap. The door should still be wired open. You can also use a cage, medium or large pet carriers, or a cardboard box.

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### Trapping

Set the trap at the cats' normal feeding time. You may want to withhold food for one day prior to trapping to ensure that the cat is hungry enough to go into the trap. Line the bottom of the trap with a thin sheet of newspaper and put some wet food, mackerel, anchovies, or tuna in a paper or plastic dish set all the way in the back of the trap. Trail a tiny bit of food inside the trap from the front to the back.

To avoid accidentally trapping skunks or raccoons, try to trap before dark or just after dawn. After the trap is set, hide out of sight—in your car, behind bushes or trees, or anywhere the cat cannot see you. Once the cat is trapped, approach quietly and cover the trap with a sheet or towel. This will quickly calm the cat down.

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## **Hard To Catch Cats**

For very wary cats, you may need two weeks or more of conditioning before they will go in the trap. You can make a trap more enticing by putting a bit of canned food, baby food, or catnip on the outside of the trap. Cats love the smell of a pungent herb called valerian—try boiling some in water to make a strong-smelling broth. It is hard for cats to resist.

If ongoing trapping has caused some of the cats to become trap shy, try waiting a week or two before resuming trapping. A short break can reduce the cats' fear of the trap.

Sick cats can be particularly difficult to catch. Try baiting the trap with warm chicken broth, warm water, valerian, or warmed up baby food.

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## **Trapping Kittens**

It is best to use a kitten-sized trap. If you cannot find one, tie a string to the door of a plastic pet carrier. Then run the string through the inside of the carrier and out the holes at the back. Set a brick or something heavy behind the carrier so it will remain stationary when you pull the string. Hide out of sight holding the string. When the kitten enters the carrier, pull the string and hold tight so she cannot push the door open. Keep the string taut until you latch the door. (Please keep in mind that all feral cats must be in humane traps for The SF/SPCA Feral Fix Program).

If you are trying to catch a mother cat and her kittens, first catch the kittens and place them in a plastic pet carrier. Then set a humane trap and place the carrier with the kittens behind the trap. (The door of the carrier should be facing the back of the trap.) Cover the end of the trap and the whole carrier with a sheet or towel. The food and the sound of the kittens crying will lure the mom cat into the trap.

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## **Selective Trapping**

In colonies where most of the cats have already been trapped, you may need to control when the trap door closes so you can catch the right cat. This is called selective trapping.

The SF/SPCA has traps modified for selective trapping, or you can prepare your own. Purchase a small hook (the type used for a hook-and-eye latch) at the hardware store. Attach it on the trap next to the hook that normally holds the trap door open. When the door is held open with your new hook, stepping on the trip plate does not shut the door. Tie a string to the new hook.

Pulling the string will release the door.

Set your modified trap as described above, and hide out of sight holding the string. Put extra food in the trap, as many cats may go in and out before the right one does.

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## **Post-Surgery Care**

After spay/neuter surgery, cats can be held in their traps for 24-36 hours until they are ready to be returned to their habitats. See our "Post-Surgery Recovery Care" fact sheet for details.

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### **San Francisco SPCA Resources**

- • Fact sheets including "The Care and Feeding of Feral Cats," "Post-Surgery Recovery Care," and more.
- • Lifeline for Feral Cats (415) 554-3071. We can provide advice specific to your situation.
- • Feral Cat Video Series, including *Humane Trapping*.
- • The SF/SPCA Feral Fix Program provides free spay/neuter for San Francisco feral cats, no appointment necessary.

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(415) 554-3000





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## Rescue Groups and Shelters

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### Rescue Groups & Shelters:

- Itty Bitty Orphan Kitty Rescue [www.ittybittyorphankittyrescue.org](http://www.ittybittyorphankittyrescue.org) (408)979-1307
- Humanity for Cats [www.humanityforcats.com](http://www.humanityforcats.com) 408-997-9332
- Nike Animal Rescue Foundation [www.narfrescue.org](http://www.narfrescue.org) (408)946-2291
- Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary (no-kill sanctuary) (408)420-7233  
[www.safehavenanimalsanctuary.org](http://www.safehavenanimalsanctuary.org)
- Companion Animal Rescue Effort [www.carepets.org](http://www.carepets.org) (408)929-2287
- Pet Network [www.petnetwk.org](http://www.petnetwk.org) (408)450-2452
- Town Cats [www.towncats.org](http://www.towncats.org) (408)779-5761
- Pets In Need (no-kill shelter) [www.petsinneed.org](http://www.petsinneed.org) (650)367-1405
- Palo Alto Animal Service [www.papd.org/animal/index.html](http://www.papd.org/animal/index.html) (650)496-5971
- Peninsula Humane Society <http://peninsulahumanesociety.org> (650)340-8200
- Alley Cat Rescue [www.alleycatrescue.com](http://www.alleycatrescue.com) (510)713-8674
- Furry Friends [www.furryfriendsrescue.org](http://www.furryfriendsrescue.org) (510)794-4703
- East Bay Animal Referral (510)841-7297

- Contra Costa Humane Society [www.cchumane.org](http://www.cchumane.org) (925)279-2247
- A.R.F. (Walnut Creek/Contra Costa County) [www.tlr-arf.org](http://www.tlr-arf.org) (925)256-1273
- Pets Unlimited (no-kill shelter) [www.petsunlimited.org](http://www.petsunlimited.org) (415)563-6700
- San Fransisco SPCA (no-kill shelter) [www.sfspca.org](http://www.sfspca.org) (415)554-3000
- Silicon Valley Friends of Ferals [www.svff.org](http://www.svff.org)