

# Guidelines for Trap Use

By nature, cats are curious about their surroundings and are natural hunters. Unaltered cats tend to roam more than their spayed or neutered counterparts. While the Humane Society recommends that cat owners keep their pet(s) indoors, this is not always possible. Thus, cats can roam into areas where they are unwanted, i.e. gardens, flower beds, etc.

All Bay area cities in California have a roaming at large law pertaining to pets. What that means is that they should be kept on the owner's property at all times unless leashed and accompanied by the owner. This law includes cats. You may want to talk to your neighbors about this; they are probably unaware of this fact.

You may want to try fencing your yard (yes there is such thing as cat fencing see our website at: [http://www.hssv.org/behavior/cat/cat\\_fence.htm](http://www.hssv.org/behavior/cat/cat_fence.htm) for more info. This would not allow cats to drop into your yard (or if they did you could either catch them or if you chose to let them go, they would not repeat the same mistake twice).

You do have the legal right to humanely trap a cat if it is on your property (check with your county first) and turn it into the local humane society. Humane traps are available for rental through local feed stores or you can purchase one as well. [http://www.hssv.org/resources/feralcats\\_humanetraps.htm](http://www.hssv.org/resources/feralcats_humanetraps.htm)

You can also try a device called a Scarecrow. It is a sprinkler that has a motion detector built into the head and sets off the water when it detects motion. <http://www.smarthome.com/6120.html> Petco may sell them, try calling around to locate a dealer.

There are also many repellants on the market. They must be reapplied daily to be effective. Some cats learn to avoid the area for the first couple of days but then desensitize to the product and are back in your yard within a week.

Before trapping a cat, we encourage you to discuss the challenges you are facing with the cat owner. If no action is taken and trapping is the final solution, please be aware of the following.

As the trapper, you accept responsibility for the welfare of the animal while it is in the trap. The following guidelines will help you trap the animal in a humane way, causing the least amount of stress or trauma.

## SETTING THE TRAP

- Place the trap in a sheltered area, protected from the hot sun, severe cold, rain and wind.
- Cover the trap with a towel or blanket leaving the door unobstructed. Covering the trap will help reduce stress or panic.
- Put a small amount of food in an unbreakable container (tuna, sardines or canned cat food).
- Provide water during warm weather.
- Remove any other sources of food

## CHECKING THE TRAP

- The trap should be checked every two hours during the day.
- Night traps should be checked no later than 8:00 a.m.

## SAFETY TIPS

- Never carry a trap with an animal in it next to your body.
- Never put your fingers inside the trap when handling it.
- Never set a trapped animal next to an electrical cord.



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- Be sure the trap is secure prior to transporting the animal. Remember to always cover the trap once the animal is inside.
- Keep the trap covered at all times.

### TRAPPED WILDLIFE

- If you find a wild animal in your trap, release it immediately where it was caught.
- Do not try to handle the animal. It will be frightened and may bite.
- Wearing heavy gloves, roll the trap over gently, and push on the door. It should drop open.
- Leave the area promptly so the animal can go on his way.

### APPROACHING A SKUNK

- Approach the trap quietly, holding a large body length sheet of plastic in front of you to create a curtain.
- Drape the plastic over the trap, leaving the door uncovered. If the skunk sprays, it will hit the plastic, not you. Release as above.

*If advice is needed, please call the Humane Society Silicon Valley at:  
(408)727-3383, ext. 753.*