

The Outdoor Cat

Allowing your cat to roam free affects not only you, but your neighbourhood too! The City of Pickering's Responsible Pet Ownership By-Law No. 6811/07, section 18 prohibits cats from being at large or off their owner's property. The City of Pickering Animal Services section encourages all residences to keep their cats inside or, ensure that when outside they are supervised or walked on a leash/harness.

Outdoor cats have an increased chance of contacting diseases such as feline immunodeficiency virus or feline leukaemia. Cats allowed to run free are more likely to be injured from road traffic accidents, or from encounters with other stray animals, than from those that are kept inside. In the warmer weather, outdoor cats run the risk of being poisoned, (many plants and garden chemicals commonly used in our gardens have proven to be highly toxic) while in the winter months they can be at risk of frostbite or antifreeze poisoning.



Owners of cats who allow them to run free are at risk of being charged under the By-law, and are risking their pet's lives. Cat owners should help protect their cats by keeping them inside and by purchasing a City of Pickering pet licence. As well as being by-law requirements, the licence tag will allow an Animal Services Officer to reunite the cat back home if ever lost.

Tips for helping an outdoor cat adjust to living on the inside

The key to reducing stress on a cat is creating an indoor environment which is safe and stimulating, but allows the cat to display all of its natural behaviours. The following information is designed to provide some simple yet important examples of how you can help ensure that your cat remains happy and healthy when living indoors.

Food and water

Cats naturally spend up to six hours per day hunting, stalking, catching, and consuming prey. Providing indoor cats with an opportunity to hunt for food can help reduce boredom, inactivity and unwanted destructive behaviours. The predictable availability of food and water twice a day in the kitchen does not represent any kind of challenge whatsoever. Try the following:



- Place dry food in containers with holes just big enough for one kibble to escape. This encourages them to use their natural hunting instinct while providing enhanced stimulation and enrichment
- Place dry food in a variety of locations (high and low), throughout your home
- Place dry food inside small cardboard boxes with the lids slightly open to encourage the cat to knock the box over or remove the food with its paw
- Place dry food inside cardboard egg boxes

Resting areas and scratching posts

Cats are natural climbers and it is important that the home environment provides opportunities for them to exercise, rest and observe a variety of places.

Cats scratch as a way to maintain their claws and to allow them to mark their territory. If scratching areas are not made available for this, it is not uncommon to find cats scratching items of your furniture. The best way to reduce the risk of destroyed furniture is to provide your cat with a few portable scratching posts throughout your home. The reverse side of a scrap piece of carpet or an old outdoor foot mat can also make great scratching areas for cats. The more a cat is able to act out their natural instincts, the less likely they are to be destructive.

Toys and predatory play

Most toys soon become predictable and boring. To help challenge your cats senses, new items should be brought into the home on a regular basis. Items such as wood, stone, cardboard boxes and paper bags are excellent for cats to play with. Place these items in various locations around your home so the cat can decide when and how to explore.



Tips for Detering Nuisance Cats

Residents who are having problems with a nuisance cat are encouraged to speak to the cat's owner. Many times people forget that by informing the owner of the animal about the issue, it may solve the problem. If this is not an option or has not worked in the past, contact Animal Services and arrangements can be made to investigate the complaint further.

Along with speaking to the owner and involving Animal Services, you, the homeowner, may take some steps to encourage cats from not staying on your property. Below are some suggestions which may humanely deter cats from being in your yard and/or on your property:

- Sprinkle Cayenne or Red Pepper in the area that the cat is going into.
- Sprinkle Coffee Grounds in the area that cats are going into
- Place Aluminum Foil in the garden (cats do not like the sound or reflection)
- Place Garlic or Vinegar in the area that the cat is going into
- Place Orange or Citrus Peels in the area the cat is going into

Please refrain from feeding a stray cat. It will only encourage them to keep coming back.

The City of Pickering is responsible for providing Animal Services to our community

Services Include:

- Investigating animal bites
- Picking up stray dogs
- Licensing of dogs and cats
- Investigate barking dog complaints
- Investigate dog and cat at large complaints
- Reuniting lost pets back with their owners
- Promote responsible pet ownership through public education
- Responding to public enquiries on animal issues
- Provide emergency medical care for injured and ill stray domestic animals



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Nuisance Cats

A Community Issue



Questions?

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