

Introducing your new Working Cat

Thank you for saving the life of a shelter cat by giving it a fabulous outdoor home! In order to help your new cat transition to its new home, please follow these important steps, and don't hesitate to contact the Lake County Animal Shelter or TNR Lake County if you have any further questions!

Confinement: Your new cat should be set up in a confined area when it first arrives at your location, for approximately a week.

Barns: If the barn doors close securely the cat can be confined to the barn, but most people prefer confining the cat to a tack room or feed room. While confined, your new cat should have access to a clean litter box (even if the cat will not have a litter box once released), food and water. By keeping your cat in the barn for about a week, your cat will associate the barn as "home base" so that once the cat has free reign of the property, it will stick around, and know where to come for food. If there are other animals in the barn area (like other cats or dogs) it is recommended you keep your new cat separate from these animals for at least a week so the cat can adjust to one big change (location!) at a time.

Industrial Areas: If you have a room that is seldom used and quiet, this might be the ideal place to confine the cat. If you don't have a space to use, please let us know! We can loan you a crate and help you figure out the best place to set it up. While confined, your new cat should have access to a clean litter box (even if the cat will not have a litter box once released), food and water. By keeping your cat confined for about a week, your cat will associate the location as "home base" so that once the cat has free reign of the property, it will stick around, and know where to come for food.

Integrating: After about a week of being kept comfortable, you can open up the area and let the cat explore. We recommend that the first time you give your cat access to the outside, it be daylight so that you can monitor for any problems. It can be overwhelming for your new cat to see the full property the first time with dogs or kids running around, so try to keep the property as quiet and stress-free as possible when you first open the doors. If you have other animals on your property, your new cat will need time to adjust to living with them- give them time! Most cats, given enough time and space, will transition into happy coexistence with other cats, dogs, and even farm animals!

Let your new cat and current cats work out their differences. Sometimes, cats need to make noise a little to learn their place in a home's social order - this behavior is normal!

Feeding: Even though your new cat will be a valuable partner in mouse control, it's important that you still give your cat access to food and water daily. Cats do not/will not hunt more if you withhold food, so make sure you're keeping your cat healthy with regular feeding. Routine feeding times/places will also help keep skittish cats from wandering off the property.

Medical Care: Your new cat is up to date on vaccines (FVRCP and Rabies), and spayed or neutered. We recommend that you continue your cat's vaccination schedule as the years progress- many "country" vets will often make house calls to vaccinate barn cats on-site. If your cats are particularly fractious, please call for advice or assistance in trapping the cats for trips to the vet. Keeping your cat up to date on shots is an important part of keeping them healthy while living outside.