

AAFP Position Statement

Welfare of shelter cats

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) advocates for the wellbeing/welfare of shelter-housed cats based on the following Five Freedoms:

- 1 Freedom from hunger and thirst
- 2 Freedom from pain, illness and disease
- 3 Freedom from discomfort
- 4 Freedom from fear and distress
- 5 Freedom to perform species-specific behaviors

This Position Statement is intended to update and replace the AAFP's earlier '2009 Welfare of shelter cats' Position Statement.

The AAFP recommends these educational resources for veterinary professionals, team members and clients/caregivers:

- ✦ **AAFP and ISFM Feline Environmental Needs Guidelines**
catvets.com/environmental-guidelines
- ✦ **Shelter housing for cats: 1. Principles of design for health, welfare and rehoming**
journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1098612X18781388
- ✦ **Shelter housing for cats: 2. Practical aspects of design and construction, and adaptation of existing accommodation**
journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1098612X18781390
- ✦ **Association of Shelter Veterinarians** sheltervet.org
- ✦ **Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters** (pages 19–20 – vaccinations)
sheltervet.org/assets/docs/shelter-standards-oct2011-wforward.pdf
- ✦ **2020 AAHA/AAFP Feline Vaccination Guidelines** (including Table 3 on page 819 for shelter-housed cats and the 2013 supplemental disease information fact sheets)
catvets.com/vaccination
- ✦ **The Association of Shelter Veterinarians' 2016 Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay–Neuter Programs** avmajournals.avma.org/doi/pdf/10.2460/javma.249.2.165
- ✦ **UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program** sheltermedicine.com
- ✦ **Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, UF College of Veterinary Medicine**
sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu

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