

## Important Trapping Information

**Prepare the traps.** Prepare the traps away from the trap site to prevent unfamiliar noises and commotion that could frighten the cats away. Always test the trap to be sure it's working correctly. You can see a demonstration of setting a Tru-Catch trap and setting a Tomahawk trap on this website. [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org)

**a. Line the bottom of the trap and tag the trap.** Place newspaper, folded lengthwise, inside the bottom of the trap to protect the cats' paws. I use a heavy towel or cardboard. If it is windy, secure the newspaper to the trap with tape - this is done so the wind will not move the newspaper and frighten the cats. Should you open the rear door, be sure to re-lock it before trapping.

**b. Bait the traps.** Place approximately one tablespoon of bait (tuna, sardines, or other strong smelling food - usually the ones in oil work best) at the very back of the trap, so that the cat will step on the trigger plate while attempting to reach the food. You may choose to put the food in a small bowl for this; **do not use a food can** has sharp edges that could harm the cat once trapped. Drizzle some juice from the bait in a zigzag pattern along the trap floor toward the entrance. You should also place a tiny bit of food ( $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon) just inside the entrance of the trap to encourage the cat to walk in. **Do not use too much food at the entrance** of the trap for two reasons: 1) the cat may be satisfied before making it to the trip plate, and 2) cats should have a relatively empty stomach for at least 12 hours before surgery.

**c. Set the traps.** Place a trap on the ground and make certain it is stable and will not rock or tip. Do not place the trap on a hillside or incline. Set the traps within your eye line so you can keep track of them without having to re-enter the area every time you want to check it. If you are using multiple traps, stagger them and have them facing different directions. Try to place the traps where they will attract a cat and be camouflaged, for example, near a bush. Move quietly and slowly so your movements will not frighten cats away. Set the traps and leave the area quietly. The cats are unlikely to enter the traps if you are standing nearby. You should not go back and check on the traps until about 30 minutes has passed from when you set them.

**Keep track of the traps at all times.** Traps should **never** be left unattended. Check the traps frequently from a distance. Choose a location to park your vehicle and wait where you are far enough away to give the cats a sense of safety, but close enough so that you can see them.

**Keep the trap covered** to decrease the cat's stress and prevent injury since they thrash against the cage. This could also encourage the cat to go inside the trap since it appears to be a covered safe place. Also, traps may be stolen, damaged, or sprung, or someone who does not understand your intentions may release a trapped cat so it is important to monitor the traps at all times and have an exact count of how many traps you start and end with.

**After the cat has been trapped,** cover the entire trap with a large towel or sheet before moving it. Covering the traps will help to keep the cats calm. Avoid transporting trapped cats in an open pick up truck or trunk of the car. Move trapped cats away to a quiet, safe area to avoid scaring them and to prevent molestation from other animals. Do not leave a trapped cat in inclement weather conditions. It is normal for cats to thrash around inside the trap. You may be tempted to release a thrashing cat because you fear that they will hurt themselves, but **cats calm down if the trap is covered**. Remember, you are doing this for their benefit. If they are released, they will continue to breed, and you may not be able to trap them again. Also, most injuries from traps are very minor, such as a bruised or bloody nose or a scratched paw pad. You should never open the trap or try to touch a conscious or semi-conscious feral cat. Behave appropriately around trapped cats by being calm, quiet, and not touching them, even if they appear friendly under normal circumstances.