

Trapping in Sunnyvale

Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV)
901 Ames Ave, Milpitas, CA 95035

BRINGING IN CATS

- **Sunnyvale cats are accepted every day at HSSV without any appointments.** Bring the cat to the intake department (surrender door) 7 days a week from 9-6pm.
 - If **friendly**, the cat goes up for adoption after a 72 hour stray hold and if no owner is found.
 - If **feral**, the cat goes through a trap-neuter-return (TNR) program and is returned by volunteers to the address where it was trapped.
- Feral cats are fixed (spayed/neutered), vaccinated, microchipped, flea treated, dewormed, and ear tipped at no cost.
- Contact Officer Robinson from animal control with any questions on TNR at HSSV: 408-730-7178.

PREPARING TO TRAP

- **Borrow traps.** Traps can be borrowed from Bay Area Cats (bayareacats.org/tnr) or animal control by calling (408) 730-7178. To buy, get the large [Havahart trap](#) (30-32" length), [Tru Catch](#), or a [Tomahawk](#).
- **Trap train!** Feed the cat inside of a trap that is zip tied open, so it won't shut. You can start the food at the front of the trap and slowly move it to the back.
- **Withhold food.** Remove all food sources 24-36 hours before trapping, to ensure cats are hungry enough to enter traps. Do NOT feed immediately after trapping or cats learn avoiding traps means food.
- **Feed on a schedule.** Feed the cats on a schedule twice per day, within a 30 minute window. They will quickly learn to come around at the same time every day, and this makes trapping easier.

SETTING TRAPS

- **Base:** use newspaper, cardboard, or pee pads. If it is windy, use masking tape to secure the base.
- **Bait:** tuna, sardines, Fancy Feast flaked fish & shrimp, and Friskies are all good options.
 - Use a **small amount** at the very front of the trap (2-3 very small PEA SIZED piles) leading towards the trip plate. The main bait (1 Tbsp) is placed at the very back of the trap.
 - Fling a small amount of bait outside, leading to the front of the trap.
 - **Note:** do not put any bait on or near the trip plate, or it will cause an early trigger and the cat will escape.
- **Placement:** place the trap flush against a wall, plants, or other objects. The best spot for the trap is where the cats are used to eating.

GUIDELINES

- **Never leave a trap unattended.** Traps can be stolen, cats can be taken or harmed, or may harm themselves, or you may trap wildlife.
- **When you catch a cat,** cover the trap immediately with a large towel, fully covering the trap, and move the trap to a quiet area. Use pee pads under the trap during car transport and holding.
- **For safety,** secure both trap doors with zip ties, as some cats are great escape artists.
- **NEVER release an unfixed cat.** You may never trap it again.

“HSSV told me I needed an appointment.”

- This is often a default response to TNR inquiries, but only applies to non-Sunnyvale cats. The city of Sunnyvale has a contract with HSSV to accept all feral and stray cats. You may come into HSSV any time with Sunnyvale cats, without approval or appointment. If you have any issues, contact animal control at (408) 730-7178.

“Help! The cat won’t go anywhere near the trap!”

- **Are you too close to the trap?** Stay indoors or in your car with a window cracked and listen for the trap. Do not stand too close or the cat won’t go in the trap.
- **Use tuna juice or bait trail** leading to the trap and to the trip plate. No food on the trip plate.
- **Is the trap against a bush, wall, or fence** instead of the middle of the porch/sidewalk/yard?
- **How long have you tried waiting?** It may take 3-4 hours waiting over multiple days to trap a cat.
- **Are you trapping early morning and night?** Cats are most active early morning and after dark.
- **Try trap training.** Zip tie open the trap overnight (so it won’t catch a cat) and feed the cats only out of the trap for several days. You may have to start the food bowl slightly outside of the trap, and move it further inside each day.

“I have fixed cats that keep going in the trap and the unfixed one won’t.”

- Try a drop trap. You can post on a Nextdoor or Facebook pet group, or contact a rescue like 13th St Cats to ask to borrow a drop trap.
- Try the bottle and string method. Attach a half filled water bottle to a string. Prop open the trap door with the bottle. Wait until the target cat is eating in the trap, and pull the string quickly to remove the bottle, shutting the door. You’ll want to use enough food in the trap so the fixed cats can eat and leave.

“I found baby kittens, what do I do?”

- Follow the guide at bayareacats.org/kittens-hssv.
- If they are not in immediate danger or sick, wait until they start walking around or eating at 4-6 weeks, and then trap them with the mom cat and bring them to HSSV. If the kittens are injured or sick, take them to HSSV and trap the mother cat.
- If you are unable to trap the mom cat, ask for help and do not take the kittens unless they are in danger or sick. Reach out for help: bayareacats.org/tnr.

“I can’t find a trap! Animal control has none available or I need a drop trap.”

- 13th Street Cat Rescue • 408-566-3637 • info@13thstcats.org
- Cat Resource Center • (408) 335-4357 • admin@catcenter.org
- Ask on Nextdoor - you may have a neighbor close by who would be willing to lend one.

“I am physically disabled or elderly, and do not have friends/family/neighbors to help me trap.”

- Submit a request to the Cat Resource Center catcenter.org/help.
- Submit a request to local trappers bayareacats.org/tnr.

“I took the cat to the intake department at the shelter but I don’t know when it will come back.”

- A cat that goes through intake will be evaluated for adoption. You can inquire about the cat using the ID number you received at drop off and emailing intake@hssv.org.