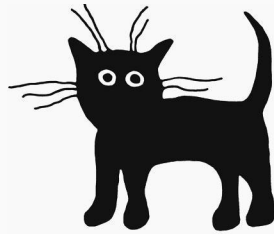


# ASAP

## Volunteer Manual



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## Section I - Introduction

### **About ASAP Cats**

The ASAP Cats (Animal Shelter Assistance Program) is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization that cares for cats and kittens that are received by the Santa Barbara County Animal Shelter in Goleta. ASAP Cats provides humane care for these animals and our work eliminates the practice of euthanizing felines for reasons other than serious health or behavior problems.

### **ASAP Cats Mission**

ASAP Cats's mission is to eliminate the killing of adoptable cats impounded at the Santa Barbara County Animal Shelter by providing daily care, medical rehabilitation and adoptive homes. In addition to the primary goal stated above, ASAP Cats also seeks to:

- Improve the public perception of the animal shelter and increase adoption activity.
- Reduce the population of stray and homeless cats through spay/neuter, redemption, foster care, and other educational programs.
- Promote the benefits of companion animals.
- Counsel and educate the public in providing a healthy and safe environment for cats.
- Form working relationships with other Santa Barbara County animal welfare groups.

### **Before There Was ASAP Cats...**

Trying to imagine what the shelter environment was like in 1988 is nearly impossible for anyone who wasn't directly involved at the time—due to the number of cages available, the population was limited to approximately 50 cats, including kittens. In that single year alone, the County of Santa Barbara euthanized approximately 4,400 cats— including all unsocialized kittens, sick and injured cats, and horrifically, many healthy, friendly cats that had the potential to become wonderful companions. At that time it was considered inhumane to house a cat longer than two weeks in a cage, so after a mere 14 day stay at the shelter, cats were euthanized. The adoption rate for cats at the Santa Barbara shelter was only 10%, meaning that 90% of cats entering the shelter were killed.



In October of 1989, a group of passionate citizens concerned about animal welfare in our community lobbied the County Board of Supervisors to prevent the Santa Barbara County Animal Shelter from closing to the public for adoptions on Saturdays. The Supervisors agreed, on the condition that those in protest would assist in staffing the shelter on Saturdays. And from that simple mandate, ASAP Cats was born.

## **Saving Lives...**

In the beginning, ASAP Cats volunteers worked only on Saturdays. Determined to save more cats, the small but dedicated group continued to increase its role in advocating for the felines under its care. By 1990 volunteers had taken full responsibility for the daily cleaning, feeding and medicating of all tame cats seven days a week, 365 days a year. ASAP Cats's adoption rate leapt from a mere 10% to 100% of adoptable cats. In 1990, ASAP Cats became the first municipal shelter/nonprofit partnership in the U.S. to stop the euthanasia of adoptable cats for the sole purpose of population control and space within the shelter.

## **From Humble Beginnings to a Bright Future...**

ASAP Cats began with a central goal of attempting to eliminate the killing of adoptable cats, something that had never been done by a municipal shelter/nonprofit partnership. Everyone involved agreed that the goal was noble, but could it be achieved in a humane and responsible way? In reality, ASAP Cats should never have survived—if you consider the number of cats that were impounded, the extreme shortage of space, money and volunteer time, and opposition from several fronts. But looking back now at all that ASAP Cats has accomplished over the past 25+ years, not only has that goal been achieved, but the standard by which ASAP Cats holds itself accountable keeps getting higher—and our dedicated volunteers continue to rise to meet the challenges with hard work, enthusiasm and the knowledge that tens of thousands of cats have been saved through our efforts.

## **Basil**

Anyone that knows ASAP Cats, knows Basil! Inspired by an endearing black stray cat sheltered by ASAP Cats years ago, Basil is the official “spokescat” for ASAP Cats in our *Cat Nips* newsletter, he gives voice to over 1,000 cats and kittens moving through our shelter each year, and his crinkly whiskered image appears not only on ASAP Cats materials and advertising, but on bumpers all over town.



## **Cat Population Served**

Because ASAP Cats's current agreement with Santa Barbara Animal Services is to provide care exclusively for the cats received at the county shelter in Goleta, we do not have the ability to accept cats directly into ASAP Cats—Animal Services retains all decision-making in this area. However, ASAP Cats is considered an “open admission” shelter—meaning that we are not selective about the cats we care for, and take responsibility for ***every cat and kitten*** that Animal Services admits into the county shelter in Goleta.

There are two primary categories of cats received by Animal Services—lost/stray cats and owner surrendered cats.

## **Lost/Stray Cats**

All lost or stray cats in the southern part of Santa Barbara County (except for the city of Carpinteria) are brought to the Santa Barbara County Animal Services (next door to ASAP Cats). Once registered with Animal Services, the cat is taken to ASAP Cats for shelter and care. Members of the public should contact ASAP Cats directly to file a Lost Cat Report if their cat was lost in the city of Santa Barbara or Goleta, or in the County areas of Carpinteria, Summerland, Montecito, or the Gaviota Coast.

Cats found in the city of Carpinteria are under the jurisdiction of Carpinteria Animal Control (805-775-4418). Cats found in other areas of Santa Barbara County (Lompoc, Buellton, Solvang, Santa Maria) are taken to the nearest Animal Services division, either Lompoc (805-737-7755) or Santa Maria (805-934-6119). The three Humane Societies—Santa Barbara, Santa Maria Valley and Santa Ynez Valley—are “closed admission” shelters, selectively screening cats turned in by their owners. The three humane societies do not accept stray cats.

Owners may call ASAP Cats to check for their lost cat. The Lead Volunteer will check new arrivals for any matching descriptions and, if one is not found, they will have the owner fill out the online Lost Cat Report. The owner will be provided helpful information on finding their cat such as putting up flyers, posting on Craigslist, and speaking with neighbors. Incoming strays in the New Arrivals room will be compared with those in the Lost Cat reports to see if a match can be made.

## **Holding Period**

By California law, a stray cat is neither adoptable nor available for viewing by the general public until after a designated holding period to allow time for the owner to redeem it. A cat with no identification/microchip is held for three (3) full business days, becoming adoptable on the fifth business day after the cat arrives at the shelter, Sundays and holidays are not counted. A cat with a microchip or other identification (such as a collar with tag), must be held for ten (10) business days after the owner is notified before being designated as adoptable.



If the owner does not redeem the cat within the legal holding periods, the cat is considered "relinquished" by the owner and becomes available for adoption. Therefore, it is very important for members of the public to report lost cats immediately and frequently visit ASAP Cats to follow up.

Every stray cat is scanned for a microchip upon arrival. If a microchip is found, Animal Services will try to contact the registered owner. The same procedure occurs if the cat has a collar and tag. It is imperative that the owner keep the cat's microchip or tag contact information up-to-date. All cats and kittens at ASAP Cats are microchipped to facilitate a reunion between cat and owner if ever lost.

## Owner Surrendered Cats

Animal Services will also accept cats surrendered by their owners—also known as OTIs (owner turn-ins). However, the criteria for accepting OTIs is at the sole discretion of Animal Services and can sometimes be the cause of tension or misunderstanding.

Because the mission of the Santa Barbara Humane Society (SBHS) (next door to ASAP Cats) is solely tied to providing shelter for **owned cats** that people can no longer care for, any person intending to surrender their cat must first attempt to do so at SBHS, which is a closed admission shelter. Only if the cat is denied entry at SBHS will Animal Services consider accepting it. This can be a source of frustration for the public—and it is very important that ASAP Cats volunteers not engage in discussions with the public on this topic.

All members of the public wanting to surrender a cat should be directed to Animal Services—and every ASAP Cats volunteer needs to understand that ASAP Cats has no decision-making authority with regard to whether these cats will ultimately come to ASAP Cats.

The only exception to the above is with regard to cats adopted from ASAP Cats. We have an expression: "Once an ASAP Cats cat, ALWAYS an ASAP Cats cat!" Our agreement with Animal Services is that any cat adopted from ASAP Cats will always be accepted back into our shelter if the owner needs to surrender it.

## Protective Custody Cats

ASAP Cats occasionally provides daily care and shelter for cats taken into Protective Custody (PC) by Animal Services. The reasons for the PC may include situations where the owner has been arrested or hospitalized, or has died. PC cats are generally housed in New Arrivals and volunteer access to them is restricted—they are not available for adoption unless the PC designation is lifted by Animal Services or Santa Barbara City Animal Control.





## **Organizational Structure**

### **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is the governing body which makes policy decisions regarding the mission and goals of the organization. The Board members infuse the organization with energy, ideas, vision, and just plain hard work. As with all Boards of Directors, it is fiscally responsible for the organization. Board Members review and approve annual operating budgets, quarterly cash flow reports, and program and event budgets. The ASAP Cats Board of Directors selects and evaluates the Executive Director who reports directly to the Board.

Together, Board Members are legally, financially and morally responsible for all activities of the organization. Board Members are solely responsible for determining organization policy in the following areas: Human Resources, Planning, Finance, Community Relations, and Organizational Operations. In addition, Board Members are emissaries of ASAP Cats in the community.

### **Program Services**

Program services are all those activities that take place within the shelter, as well as activities outside of the shelter such as outreach, offsite adoption events, training and volunteer recruitment. Organizationally, ASAP Cats is divided into Programs—each with a Director who supervises a team of volunteers responsible for specific tasks. The Program Directors are a combination of paid staff and volunteers. Together they are responsible for ensuring that the cats receive proper care, maintaining facilities and equipment, developing and implementing adoption promotions, interacting with the public and performing other daily operations involved in running the shelter.

- Wellness Program
- Feline Behavior Program
- Feline Retention Program
- Adoption Program
- Foster Program
- Administrative Program
- Outreach Program
- Community Cats Program
- Shelter Operations
- Social Media Program
- Working Cats Program
- Volunteer Program

### **ASAP Cats Staff**

#### **ASAP Cats Executive Director**



The Executive Director (ED) oversees all ASAP Cats activities, operations and communications. The ED reports directly to the ASAP Cats Board of Directors and supervises, directly and indirectly, all ASAP Cats staff and volunteers. The ED is the primary liaison between ASAP Cats and the community, Santa Barbara County Animal Services, other rescue groups, and donors and supporters.

## **Volunteer Program Director**

The Volunteer Program Director is responsible for all of the new volunteer recruiting, orientation and training as well as ensuring that all shifts are adequately staffed. The Volunteer Program Director is also instrumental in the development and implementation of procedures and programs—both operationally within the shelter, but also with regard to outreach in the community. The Volunteer Program Director is the primary point of contact for volunteers and is also responsible for tracking volunteer hours and recognizing service.

## **Wellness Program Director**

The Wellness Director is responsible for the management of our entire Feline Wellness Program and works closely with ASAP Cats's primary veterinarian and other local vet clinics. The Wellness Director supervises the daily care and medical evaluation for all ASAP Cats cats, as well as provides information to the adopters of older and special needs cats. The Wellness Director is responsible for supervising all activities in the Surgery, Sick Bay, Isolation and New Arrivals areas.

## **Wellness Technician**

The Wellness Technician provides support to our Wellness Director and veterinarian(s). The Wellness Tech is responsible for the daily care of cats and kittens as needed, as well as administering medication. Under the supervision of the Wellness Director, the Wellness Tech is responsible for all activities in the Surgery, Sick Bay, Isolation and New Arrivals areas.



## ASAP Cats Volunteers

### Lead Volunteers

ASAP Cats has well over 100 shelter volunteers at any given time divided into 14 regular shifts. Each day, Monday through Sunday, has a morning and afternoon shift. Since currently, the shelter is closed to the public on Sunday, those shifts typically have fewer volunteers and are shorter in duration.

Every shift has one or more Lead Volunteers accountable for supervising shelter activities during that shift including cleaning, feeding, adoptions, lost cat reports, phone calls, visitors, and more. They make decisions based on ASAP Cats and Santa Barbara County Animal Services policies and procedures. To qualify as a Lead, a volunteer must exhibit skills in leadership, management, public service, communication and handling cats; and must be aware of County and ASAP Cats policies and medical procedures. Generally, a significant amount of experience working in the shelter is required before becoming a Lead Volunteer.

### Shelter Volunteers

Volunteers are responsible for daily shelter operations, including (but not limited to) the care and feeding of the cats and kittens, cage cleaning, **lost cat reports**, laundry, shelter cleaning, and ensuring the well-being of the ASAP Cats feline population. Other opportunities for volunteer advancement include:

- **Adoption Counseling:** Volunteers who demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and understanding of cat behavior may be trained to assist the public in the selection of a cat, provide guidance on care of their new cat, and complete adoption paperwork. Knowledge of ASAP Cats and Animal Services adoption and redemption guidelines and procedures is generally required.
- **Wellness Team:** Volunteers interested in medical care, who have exhibited sufficient skill in handling cats and have demonstrated a strong work ethic, may qualify to be trained to assist the Wellness Team in administering medications, preparing surgery packs, or maintaining medical records.
- **Feline Behavior Team:** Members of the Behavior Team provide cats with appropriate socialization and training to reduce stress, assist cats in adapting to the shelter environment, and improve adoptability. To be eligible for the Behavior Team, a volunteer must exhibit skill in handling cats and an understanding of ASAP Cats training procedures. A significant amount of experience working in the shelter is required.
- **Tiny Lion Tamers:** Members of the Behavior Team that specialize in providing under socialized kittens with appropriate socialization training to build trust and assist cats in adapting to the shelter/home environment. To be eligible to be a Tiny Lion Tamer, a volunteer must exhibit skill in handling cats and an understanding of ASAP Cats training procedures. A significant amount of experience working in the shelter is required.



- **Feline Retention Team:** Volunteers who demonstrate excellent interpersonal and communication skills, as well as an understanding of cat behavior may be trained to do support outreach to ASAP Cats adopters and other community members seeking assistance.
- **Administrative Assistance:** Assistants aid in maintenance of logs and records, correspondence, photocopying and other related tasks as necessary.
- **Community Cats Team:** Volunteers in the Community Cats Program focus on interacting and educating the public about community cats, strays, and possible lost cats in the field. These volunteers will take and place calls, make assessment visits, and assist in trapping cats when necessary. A volunteer wanting to be in the Community Cats Program will require strong interpersonal skills and knowledge of community cat procedures for when and when not to bring cats into the shelter.
- **Social Media Team:** The social media team creates and posts content to ASAP Cats's social media accounts as well as answers questions and monitors commenting on posts. The Social Media Team requires a desire to be creative to promote our shelter to our community in the best light possible. The team must be knowledgeable of ASAP Cats's policies and procedures and conduct themselves with proper internet etiquette as they are the online face of our organization.



## Section II - Volunteer Information

### Volunteer Requirements

Through the generosity and compassion of our volunteers and donors, ASAP Cats is able to provide the homeless and abandoned cats and kittens of our community with loving attention, veterinary care, and a place to live while awaiting a forever home. ASAP Cats shelter volunteers participate in routine cat care and upkeep of the facility, which includes feeding, grooming, cleaning cat cages, laundry, and housekeeping details at the shelter 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

### Who Can Volunteer?

ASAP Cats welcomes new volunteers who can devote a few hours a week to the care and comfort of the deserving shelter felines while they wait for a forever home. Below are listed a few prerequisites

- **Age Requirement:** Volunteers must be at least 12 years of age to be eligible for our Volunteer Program. A parent/adult partner volunteer must accompany any volunteer under the age of 16 at all times during their shifts at the shelter.
- **Time Requirement:** Volunteers are needed every day of the year at ASAP Cats between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Volunteers are asked to schedule a minimum of 3 to 4 hours per week at the shelter for at least a 6-month period. Ideally volunteers can support a full 4 hour shift.
- **Special Note:** If you have special needs that require you to have a mentor volunteer alongside you, the mentor is required to complete all steps of the training with you, as well as accompany you at all times during your regularly assigned volunteer shifts.

### Essential Duties

- Cleaning cages, emptying and cleaning litter pans, and cleaning food bowls (50%)
- Grooming, petting, and socializing the cats (20%).
- Laundry for bedding, towels, smocks, and cleaning supplies (10%).
- Feeding the cats and replacing the water (10%).
- General housekeeping duties such as sweeping, washing windows, organizing, etc. (10%).
- Other duties as assigned.

### Qualifications

- Able to work independently for long periods of time as well as work within a group atmosphere with other volunteers and/or staff.
- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities, and ask for help when needed.
- Must maintain an active email account.



## **Physical Requirements**

- Average strength with the ability to lift up to 15 pounds.
- Ability to handle and restrain a cat with extreme caution and care.
- Must not have strong allergies to cats.
- Be vaccinated against tetanus.
- Severely immunocompromised people should consult with their Doctor prior to volunteering.

## **Essential Mental Requirements**

- Ability to understand, remember, and follow instructions and procedures.
- Ability to read, comprehend, write, and communicate (example: understand words such as quarantine, feral, isolate, or caution).
- Possess problem solving capability.
- Must be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the cats and people.
- Must be able to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently in these situations, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Ability to understand the role of the volunteer and accept the boundaries between the role of the volunteer and the role of staff and other volunteers in management positions, such as Lead Volunteers and Program Directors.
- A very positive attitude and a solution oriented approach rather than complaining or gossiping about problems at the shelter.

## **Essential Emotional Requirements**

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior.
- Ability to cope with the reality that some people give up their animals without making much effort to accommodate the needs of the animal.
- Ability to set own limits on volunteering time to avoid personal burnout or compassion fatigue.
- Ability to cope with the many emotional issues of an animal shelter including animal cruelty and disregard for animals, dealing with injured and sick animals, and the reality that some of the animals may be ill, unadoptable and may have to be euthanized.

## **Benefits of Volunteering**

- The opportunity to work with a group of positive, dynamic individuals who love animals as much as you do.
- Chance to learn more about cat behavior and handling techniques, vaccine protocols or the latest treatment for illness – skills that may prove beneficial to your own pets.
- Experience the reward of knowing you helped save the life of a homeless animal. Our volunteers are elated when a cat finds a new home and leaves the shelter.



## **Shift Preparation**

### **Dress Code**

Remember, you will be cleaning—cages, litter pans, dirty dishes and the shelter in general. Wear washable clothing – nothing fancy. We suggest long pants rather than shorts; very occasionally a cat may decide you would make a good tree to climb. Furthermore, close-toed shoes are highly recommended. Smocks and nametags are provided for all volunteers.

### **Parking**

We have limited parking available in the lot in front of ASAP Cats for visitors, adopters, and Animal Services vehicles. In order to provide the best experience for potential adopters and community members, please leave the parking lot spaces available for them, there is adequate parking available on the street for volunteers. The parking lot next door belongs to the Santa Barbara Humane Society, please do not park there.

At the start of each shift, the volunteers are required to do the following:

- Put on a clean smock.
- Put on a name badge. If you need one, contact the Volunteer Program Director.
- Check in with your Lead/Mentor for any pertinent information.
- Note that bathrooms are next door in the Animal Services building.

Review and follow these simple rules to keep everyone safe and healthy:

- Volunteers must wear smocks and nametags at all times when in the shelter.
- Always sanitize your hands between handling each animal and remind visitors to do so too.
- Always return an animal to its original cage.
- Never place dirty towels, bowls, or litter pans directly on the floor. All dirty supplies should be placed in the appropriate sink, laundry basket or cleaning area.
- Children visitors should always be supervised by their own adult guardian. That said, it's also important for our volunteers to keep an eye on them, too. It is not appropriate for unaccompanied minors to visit the shelter without a supervising adult guardian.
- Report all cat bites or aggression to the Lead Volunteer.
- Respect current rules regarding the number of cats on the floor and in the runs.



## **Volunteer Online Profile**

After the Volunteer Orientation, volunteers are asked to complete a profile online and this will include a login name and password. Volunteers can update their online profile including email address, phone number, address, username, password, etc. from both login computer or at the following link:

<http://www.asapcats.org/volunteer/volunteer-login.html>

Volunteers are responsible for keeping their personal as well as emergency contact information up-to-date on their online profile.

## **Logging Volunteer Hours**

Volunteers are asked to record all hours that they are performing ASAP Cats work. We need to track volunteer hours for several reasons. First, we like to be able to acknowledge our very valued volunteers for their contributions to our organization. But also very importantly, volunteer hours save ASAP Cats money because it is work we would otherwise have to pay staff to perform. Donors and foundations offering grants place a lot of weight on the value of volunteer contributions when they choose where to invest their money. So by logging your hours, you benefit ASAP Cats in more ways than one!

You can log your hours from the login computer or your home computer by signing into your online profile. You should receive a temporary password via email prior to your first shift. Please contact the Volunteer Program Director if you have not received it or if you need assistance. Your Lead can also assist you with the logging process if needed.

For volunteers working from home or remotely, you can also record hours at the link below:

<http://www.asapcats.org/volunteer/volunteer-login.html>

## **Community Service**

All requests to earn community service hours must be reviewed and preapproved on a case by case basis by the Volunteer Program Director. ASAP Cats is unable to offer court ordered community service.

## **Greeting the Public**

ASAP Cats volunteers leave a lasting impression on every single visitor to our shelter! Therefore, it's incredibly important that we create a welcoming atmosphere for visitors and that we always treat them with respect.





Here are a few simple guidelines for greeting the public:

- Always make eye contact and smile ☺
- Ask them if they need any assistance.
- Ask them if they have visited the shelter before and are aware of the basic rules for hand disinfection between touching cats, even through the cage bars. Even if they say yes, it's still good to remind them where the sinks and hand sanitizers are located. And if they are first time visitors, please tell them about the importance of hand disinfection and point out the sink and hand sanitizer locations.
- Also remind all visitors that they should ask for assistance before opening any cage door. ***It is against ASAP Cats policy for visitors to take cats out of the cages or carry them around the shelter***—cat handling should always be done by a trained ASAP Cats volunteer.
- Don't hover around visitors unless they have asked you for assistance, but do keep an eye on their activities. Remind them that if they need help, anyone in a smock can assist them.
- Do not attempt to answer questions when you are not sure of the answer! Rather than give out incorrect information, ***always*** seek the assistance of your Lead Volunteer.

Remember, when you are volunteering at ASAP Cats, from the minute you put on your smock and nametag, you are representing our organization!

## Answering Questions from the Public and Unauthorized Tasks

***It is exceedingly important to know when you DON'T know the answer!*** When volunteering you will receive many questions from the public. In order to keep from misinforming the public, please direct the public to a Lead Volunteer to properly answer their questions. Further, should someone ask you to do something you have not been trained to do, you must direct them to a Lead Volunteer. In doing this you will avoid the likelihood of doing a task or answering a question improperly. Failure to abide by this policy could result in termination.

## Training and Support Provided

Training for volunteers will be provided at the Orientation, Basic Training Session-and during trainings offered throughout the year. In addition, the Volunteer Director and Lead Volunteers are available on an ongoing basis to answer questions and provide other assistance as needed.

Ongoing training is offered to notify volunteers of policy changes and/or provide additional information to all those interested in increasing their knowledge.

- Emails from our Executive and Program Directors are sent to all volunteers to provide new information or policy changes.
- Informal training sessions are held with each shift to share and demonstrate new information.



- Formal training classes such as those required to access restricted areas are provided on-site.
- Off-site training and information sessions are held dealing with specific topics such as cat behavior and cat health issues. These provide not only information but also a chance to meet fellow volunteers.

## Scheduling and Absences

In order to provide the cats with high quality care, we do require volunteers to commit to a minimum of 4 months of volunteering on a regular schedule, coming the same shift each week, 3 to 4 hours per week. This requirement is needed to ensure adequate training and maintain a consistent level of shift coverage. We do allow for vacations and needed days off, however we ask that all ***volunteers notify their Lead Volunteer directly as soon as they are aware that they must miss a shift*** so that a substitute may be found.

- Only in cases of emergency or sudden illness should you call ASAP Cats to report an absence on the same day as your scheduled shift.
- The Volunteer Program Director will contact volunteers who have regular unreported absences. Ongoing unreported absences may result in termination.
- Leaves of absences or requests for schedule changes must be submitted in writing to the Volunteer Program Director. Volunteers taking leave longer than six months may be asked to attend the orientation and training again.
- To schedule or modify your weekly shift, please contact the Volunteer Program Director.



## **Shelter Areas - Public, Volunteer Only and Restricted**

### **Open to the Public**

The following areas are open to the public:

- **Lobby** - Volunteers and visitors enter the shelter through the lobby. There is also a “lobby store” where supplies and cat related items may be purchased. There is frequently a cat in residence, usually one who cannot tolerate the stresses of the Main Room, make sure to observe notes on doors to keep the lobby cat from escaping outside or into the Main Room.
- **Main Room** - The Main Room houses the adoptable cats and is open to all volunteers, as well as the public. Cats are frequently roaming the floor so special care is needed when entering any of the doors to keep them from escaping. There is plenty of hand sanitizer placed around on the counters and windowsills, as well as water bottles in case of disagreements between cats; volunteers should be familiar with their location.
- **Runs** - There are three runs off the Main Room to allow the cats some freedom and a little fresh air and sunshine. Note that on occasion cats will live in the runs for various reasons and may or may not be accessible to the public; signs will be posted in these cases.
- **Visiting Rooms** - There are two visiting rooms to allow the public to see how a cat interacts with them out of the cage.
- **Kitten Area in Main Room** – During kitten season, all adoptable kittens are generally grouped together in one section of the Main Room. Kittens, like children, have weaker immune systems and are more susceptible to URI (upper respiratory infections). Volunteers and public may visit with kittens, however be especially conscientious of washing or sanitizing hands. Special attention must be paid to visiting children who cannot resist touching adorable kittens. During those few months of the year without kittens, these areas are used for the general cat population.

### **Restricted to Volunteers and Shelter Staff**

The following areas are accessible to volunteers and shelter staff only:

- **Storeroom** - There is a storeroom at the back of the shelter. This is where the cat litter is kept, as well as all the extra cleaning supplies and food. Cleaning carts are stored here once all tasks are completed for the day. This area also serves as the main laundry facility.
- **Row G Main Room** —G Row is occasionally used for unadoptable cats—these decisions are made by the Wellness staff or Feline Behavior Program Director. These cats may have minor medical or behavioral issues, need additional time to adjust to the shelter, or are still being assessed. When used for New Arrivals, G row is off limits to the public, as well as to volunteers not trained in New Arrivals practices.  
When unadoptable cats are housed in G row, the large rolling bench/divider should be turned to block access to these cages and a “No Admittance” sign posted on it as well as the swinging door and the end of the row. The Lead is responsible for keeping the public and



other volunteers out of the area and ensuring cleaning/feeding tasks are performed by the volunteers responsible for New Arrivals.

- **Breezeway** - There are two small runs in the breezeway also used to allow cats some time out of their cages. These are also occasionally used for New Arrival cats, which may be less social, so observe any cage signs before approaching.
- **Kitchen**- The kitchen is a multipurpose area with work and storage areas for feeding, laundry, and litter box cleaning. There is also a cabinet for volunteer belongings. Please note that “front end” items (food bowls) and “back end” items (litter boxes) must always be kept separate.

## Restricted to Specially Trained and Authorized Personnel

The following areas are restricted to specially trained and authorized personnel only—this is a matter of safety for both cats and volunteers:

- **New Arrivals Room** – All newly arriving cats go to the New Arrival room first. These cats are not yet adoptable and have not yet received a medical evaluation or are awaiting treatment or surgery. Cats in New Arrivals are experiencing increased stress levels because of their new environment and generally need behavioral evaluation so special handling and observation protocols have been established. Access to New Arrivals is restricted so do not enter this room unless absolutely necessary or instructed to do so by the Wellness staff. All Leads should be familiar with the current guidelines for New Arrivals, including speaking in a soft voice, avoiding making loud noises, not lifting cage covers and not handling cats unnecessarily.
- **Isolation Room (ISO)**– This area houses cats not available for adoption for various reasons. During kitten season, it is sometimes the holding area for the kittens. In most cases, protocol is the same as New Arrivals, however the area can also be used to isolate cats with illnesses such as ringworm. Regardless of the specific purpose, ISO is always off limits to all general volunteers except those who have received special training.
- **Sick Bay** – Cats get colds (Upper Respiratory Infections or URI) just like humans. A shelter is a lot like children in a classroom, so cold germs can spread very easily. Cats who show symptoms of URI are moved to Sick Bay until they are asymptomatic for a period of time. Because URI is easily spread between cats, it is recommended that volunteers who clean in Sick Bay leave the shelter immediately afterwards. Volunteers who feed and clean in Sick Bay have received special training and are part of our Special Cleaning Team. General volunteers should never enter Sick Bay unless specifically instructed to do so by the Wellness staff.
- **Surgery Room** – We are incredibly fortunate to have a surgery suite onsite allowing us to perform spays and neuters, as well as dentals and other simple surgical procedures. This room is a sterile environment and volunteers should never enter Surgery unless specifically invited to do so by the Wellness staff. If the door is closed and the Wellness Team is working, please ***do not disturb them at any time unless it is a true emergency***. For all questions or



concerns, please see your lead. If you need to interrupt, please knock on the door and wait for a member of the Wellness staff to answer—do not open the door yourself.

- **Vet Exam Room-** The room at the end of the Main Room is for use of the Wellness Team only. Volunteers may enter the Vet Exam Room only for housekeeping tasks when the room is empty. If the door is closed and the Wellness Team is working, please ***do not disturb them at any time unless it is a true emergency***. For all non-emergencies, please see your lead or record your concerns on the clipboard next to the vet office. There are a few holding cages in the office—avoid contact with any cats present unless the Wellness staff has asked for your assistance with feeding and/or cleaning.



## **Shelter Communication**

### **Shift Reports**

- Each Lead Volunteer prepares a report at the end of the shift listing Adoptions, New Arrivals and Redemptions. These reports should follow a simple format and should include only pertinent information that other shifts need to be aware of.
- Reports are printed and placed in the “Shift-to-Shift” binder next to the log-in computer in the Lobby. Volunteers are required to read the reports from the two days prior to their shift.

### **Cat Chat**

- This is an online database used to document cat behavior, accessible to volunteers on the shelter computer.
- There is a printout in a binder next to the computer in the Main Room listing each cat by name.
- Volunteers are encouraged to document cat behavior, likes/dislikes, and if they react aggressively to other cats.
- Take time to read about any cats with questionable behavior to help prevent injuries, provide information to, or help select the appropriate cat for potential adopters.
- Some cats may exhibit fearful or aggressive behavior at first but quickly adapt to the shelter environment. Note these changes so that a social cat is not permanently “branded” as shy or aggressive but do not remove notes about earlier behavior because it can give us an idea of how quickly a cat may adjust to their new home.

### **Medical Log**

- A clipboard is located on the wall outside the Vet Exam Room.
- Record any noted health issues such as those listed in the disease and prevention section.
- The Wellness staff will examine the cats and provide veterinary care if necessary.

### **Veterinary Records**

- The vet records for all adoptable cats and kittens are located in binders at the back end of the Main Room.
- There are also binders containing the vet records for all cats/kittens currently in foster, as well as a separate binder for those cats currently assigned to the Feline Behavior Team.
- The vet records contain all known medical history for each cat in the shelter.
- Only the Wellness Team is authorized to update any information on the vet records.



## Cats In and Cats Out Logs

- All cats arriving and departing ASAP Cats Cats are recorded in the Cats In and Cats Out Logs by the Lead Volunteer. The only exception is kittens going into foster care are not recorded in the Cats Out Log until they are adopted.
- Volunteers may take a look to see the lucky cats that were adopted and redeemed each time they sign in.

## Weekly Adoption Report

- An email is sent out listing all of the adoptions and redemptions each week.

## Cat Wish List

- Located next to the computer in the Main Room is a clipboard with a form that allows potential adopters to state if they are looking to adopt a particular type or breed of cat.
- This list does not ensure that the potential adopter is “next on the list” to adopt that particular type of cat, but it does give us the **ability** to call if such a cat comes in. Encourage them to continue to follow up by viewing available cats on our website and visiting the shelter.

## Kitten Wish List

- Located next to the computer in the Main Room is a binder with a listing of specific kittens wanted. Let potential adopters know they can submit a request.
- Again, this list does not ensure that the potential adopter is “next on the list” for a kitten however the requests are reviewed by some of the fosters to see if they have a possible match.
- Encourage them to continue to follow up by calling to ask if kittens are available or visiting the shelter.

## ASAP Cats Cats Website

- ASAP Cats Cats maintains a website to share our information with the public. The website includes the following information:
  - o Forms to report lost cats and make donations.
  - o Photos of all the current adoptable cats.
  - o Information on current news and events.
  - o FAQ section containing suggested reading for all new volunteers.
- The website address is: [www.asapcats.org](http://www.asapcats.org)



## Facebook

- ASAP Cats has a very proactive Social Media Team—be sure to check out our Facebook page for news, information and updates from happy adopters!
- [www.facebook.com/asapcats](https://www.facebook.com/asapcats)





## Cage Cards and Signs

Before opening a cage ALWAYS read the cage cards, and look for any relevant signage regarding the cat's behavior or tendencies. If the cage card says "Leads Only", your Lead and Wellness Staff are the only ones permitted to handle that cat. It is not uncommon for cats in the shelter to experience negative emotions, such as fear or frustration, and they may display aggression at the sight of other cats. Take extra caution with moving or handling cats that do not like other cats. If you are ever apprehensive about handling any animal, ask your Lead Volunteer for assistance. ***Never handle a cat that you are uncomfortable with.***

With the exception of temporary cards like "Personal Day" or "Visit me in the run" cards, only the Lead Volunteer, Behavior Team or Wellness Staff may add or remove cage cards or hanging tags.

## Cage Cards

Cat's name:  SUNNY	Age: 5 yrs
	Sex: F/S
	Color: WHITE/ORANGE TABBY
	Breed: DMH
Animal # 335190	Indoor only? ( )
Intake date: 10/30/14 Area found (stray): OTI (X)	
(X) Adoptable	(X) Medical waiver ( ) FIV+
( ) No other cats	( ) No small children ( ) No dogs
( ) Bonded with	( ) Dog tested (see notes)
What makes me so special? 10 FOR 10 CAT	

Each cat is assigned a cage card. ***Do not write on these cards!*** If any information needs to be added or changed, please consult the Wellness Team.

- It's easy—pink cards are for female cats and blue cards for male cats!
  - o White cards are initially provided at the time of intake for each cat by Animal Services.
  - o The Wellness Team will replace these white cards with the appropriate pink/blue card as part of the cat's initial veterinary exam.
- **Animal #** is assigned by Animal Services when the cat is admitted into the shelter. This # identifies the cat in all records—both at ASAP Cats and Animal Services.
- **Intake date** is the actual date the cat was admitted into the shelter by Animal Services.
- The cat is either a lost/stray or has been turned in by their owner (OTI). In the case of lost/stray cats, the area found is noted on the card to facilitate matching with lost cat reports. This may be the general street block, intersection, or neighborhood—however, we



do not write the actual street address because that can occasionally cause problems between the person who turned in the cat and the actual owner. If the cat is an OTI, there is no need to note the area found.

- **Age:** If the cat is not brought in with vet records (as is often the case), the cat's age is determined by the veterinarian. Keep in mind, the age on the card is from when the vet first sees the animal, at or around the intake date listed. If you are looking at a kitten that has been with us for some time, it will be older than indicated on the card. Use the intake date and the age listed to determine the kitten's actual age.
- **Sex:** F for female, F/S for spayed female. M is for male, for neutered males, M/N. All cats and kittens are spayed or neutered before adoption.
- **Color:** The color of the cat is noted using standard descriptions for cat markings—tabby, tortoise shell, calico, black and white, Siamese, etc. Calicos and “torties” (tortoise shell) are always female. Siamese and Himalayans are sometimes listed by “points” (the color of their feet, tail, nose, ears): lilac point, seal point, or flame point. Many cats are tabbies: brown (black stripes on brown), gray (black stripes on gray), silver (gray stripes on gray) and orange (orange stripes on orange/beige). Additionally, terms like “dilute” (meaning washed out/muted color) are also used.
- **Breed** refers typically to three categories: DLH (domestic long hair), DMH (domestic medium hair) and DSH (domestic short hair). Because most of the cats at our shelter are mixed breed rather than pure bred, these variations are noted under color rather than breed.
- **What makes me so special?** The Wellness and Behavior Teams, having worked with the cat while it was in New Arrivals will usually note something special about each cat's personality or description—for example, a crooked tail, a particularly loud or quirky purr, friendly lap cat, or if the cat is declawed or has some other physical attribute the adopters might need to be aware of.
- The following items may also be checked:
  - **Adoptable** – indicates that the cat has been cleared for adoption by the Wellness Team.
  - **Medical Waiver** – indicates that the cat has a medical condition that adopters need to be aware of. This medical waiver will be attached to the cat's veterinary record.
  - **FIV+** – ASAP Cats Cats has a very successful adoption program for FIV+ cats, however, adopters need to understand the unique needs of cats with this feline virus.
  - **No other cats, no small children, no dogs, dog tested and bonded with** are all designations determined by ASAP Cats Cats's Behavior and Wellness Teams—and are important for the physical and psychological health of a particular cat. These designations are extremely useful when matching cats with potential adopters.
  - **Indoor Only** - Some cats are adopted as “Indoor Only” due to emotional or personality needs, physical limitations or light pigmentation (ears and nose) which would make them high risk for skin cancer.
- The labels on the back of the card are the **microchip ID number** and the **barcode ID** for the cat in the Animal Services database.



## Tags with Dietary Information

- Some cats have special dietary requirements due to weight issues, preferences, and allergies.
- Some cats are fed a “wet or dry only” diet, require extra portions, or just prefer certain brands of food.
- Detailed information is also on the Special Feeding Logs in the kitchen.
- PLEASE DO NOT offer treats to cats with special dietary requirements.



## Tags that Indicate a Cat is Receiving Medication

- This is usually for a minor condition that does not require the cat to be placed in Sick Bay.
- Contact the Lead Volunteer with any questions.

## Personal Day Cards

- Bright orange “Personal Day” cards are placed on a cage if a cat has been in an altercation with another cat or occasionally a person. These cards inform volunteers and the public that the cat must remain in the cage for the remainder of the day. This is primarily a safety issue for both the cats and humans as the cat is most likely agitated and may act out of character—however, this “personal time” also greatly benefits the cat, providing quiet time for it to recover from the increased stress resulting from the altercation.
- These cards should be removed each morning when the cages are cleaned.

## Cautionary Information Regarding a Cat’s Temperament

- Many cats are fearful when first placed in the Main Room but most adjust quickly. Notify the Lead Volunteer if temperament changes are noted, positive or negative.
- Cats evaluated by the Behavior Team may have more detailed behavior cards placed on their cages.
- Only the Wellness Team or Behavior Team should place cards with specific information regarding a cat’s temperament or personality.



## **Cat Information Cards**

- Information cards may be placed behind the regular cage cards.
- Maintained by the Behavior Team, these provide information for volunteers, as well as potential adopters, and include a brief description of the cat's personality, how best to show/handle the cat and the best approach for bringing the cat into a new home.
- Also included may be information if a cat has been fostered to indicate behavior in a home environment.

## **Sponsor-A-Cat Tags**

- The Sponsor-A-Cat (SAC) Program is a very popular and successful fundraising tool. A Sponsor-A-Cat tag indicates that a donation has been made to "sponsor" that cat. The tag does not have anything to do with adoption status. Occasionally sponsors will come in and visit "their" cats—please be sure to thank them for their support!

## **A Message from the Veterinarian Regarding a Special Need**

- These notes provide information about injuries, explain coat conditions or note that a cat has just finished nursing kittens.
- Contact the Lead Volunteer with any questions.

## **No Other Cats**

- Some cats simply do not enjoy the company of other cats, but do want time outside of their cages. "No Other Cats" tags are used to inform potential adopters about a cat's needs, as well as ensure that volunteers do not place these cats in common areas with other cats.

## **Only Cat in Run/Floor**

- For cats that may be social with other cats in a home environment, but that need/prefer to have time out of their cages at the shelter without the company of other cats. This tag is also used for FIV+ cats at the shelter who under approved circumstances can be adopted to homes with non-FIV+ cats, but need to be kept separate from other cats at the shelter.

## **"Visit Me in the Run" Cage Cards**

- These cage cards inform potential adopters that a cat is out in the runs and can be visited there. It's also a reminder to volunteers of where a particular cat is, and also the need to return the cat to its cage at the end of the day.



## **Clothespins**

- Clothespins are placed on the cages to indicate a cat has been out on the floor or in the runs that day
- This is to communicate between shifts so all cats get their chance at a little freedom
- Clothespins should be removed each morning when the cages are cleaned

## **Bonded Pairs**

- Some cats find themselves at the shelter after a lifetime together and one look at them curled up together leaves no doubt that they are “bonded”. Occasionally, cats will also find their feline soulmate while at ASAP Cats and will be designated as bonded.
- All efforts are made to find designated bonded pairs a home together.
- Rare exceptions to split bonded pairs have been made for longtime shelter residents or under special circumstances. These decisions are made at the sole discretion of the Feline Behavior Director.



## **Runs and Main Room Floor - Letting Cats Out of Their Cages**

If desired by the cat, most cats should have a little time outside of their cages and be allowed to roam the designated areas.

- Observe all cage tag restrictions before allowing a cat out of a cage.
  - FIV+ cats must be isolated from non-FIV cats.
  - Cats that don't like other cats must be placed into the runs alone.
  - Most shy cats prefer to remain in their cage, do not force a reluctant cat, or any cat with a "visit in cage" tag out of its cage to socialize.
- Check Cat Chat to see if certain cats should not be allowed out together.
- Record the names of all cats released from their cages on the whiteboards next to the runs.
  - The Run 1 whiteboard also has a space for those cats loose on the Main Room floor.
  - Note restrictions such as "Only Cat" or "FIV+, no other cats" when appropriate and always check the whiteboard before adding another cat to a run or allowing one back onto the Main Floor.
- This becomes a bit of a challenge as the day goes by, cats being cats. Many want to be on whatever side of the doors that they currently are not. Try to keep track.
- Keep an eye on the public when visiting cats out in the Runs—we encourage visits but it's easy for them to let cats in/out of their allowed areas.
- Any cats involved in an altercation should be placed back in their cages for some "personal time." It doesn't matter who started the fight, both cats are required to have some "personal time" for the rest of the day. "Personal time" means that the cat must stay in their cage for the rest of the day—and no visits from volunteers or the public. If an adopter enquires about a cat having personal time, please explain that the cat had a rough day and may still be agitated. The adopter should be encouraged to visit the cat on another day, so they can get a better sense of the cat's true personality. We have orange "Personal Time" cage cards available, place one on the cage and always notify your Lead Volunteer.

***NOTE: If cats get into an altercation with each other, they are going to be agitated and more dangerous to handle. In many cases, this means they will need a few minutes to calm down before you can place them safely in their cages. Never handle an agitated cat unless you are comfortable and very experienced—seek assistance from your Lead or the Wellness staff.***

- ID collars are required on all cats when out of their cages.
  - Ask for help with squirmy cats as it is often a two person job to put a collar on a cat.
  - Always check collar fit. Two fingers should be able to slide easily but snugly between the cat and the collar.
- ID collars are not allowed on cats while in their cages, they should be removed and hung on the cage door once the cat has been returned to its cage.
  - It may take a few days to get collars prepared for new cats, notify the Lead Volunteer if one is not available.



- o Check inside the cage first for missing collars, they have been known to be turned into cat toys.
- There is a limit to the number of cats allowed in the common areas, please do not exceed the following:
  - o Runs 1--limit 4 cats
  - o Run 2--limit 2 cats
  - o Run 3 --limit 2 cats
  - o Visiting Rooms – limit 1 adult cat.
  - o Related litters of kittens can be placed in the Visiting Rooms together—however, non-related kittens should not be put together. No kittens are allowed in the Runs.
  - o Main Room floor—limit 3 cats
- Kittens are never allowed to roam free on the Main Room floor or in the Runs – no exceptions!
- Some cats object strongly to returning to their cages—always reward cats with a single treat (or their PM wet feeding) when returned to their cage so that they associate it with a positive reward. Always be aware and cautious during this process so that a quick swat doesn't catch you off guard.



## Section III - Cat Behavior and Handling

### Safety Protocols

#### Handling Restrictions

While our main goal is the well-being of our cats, volunteer safety is equally important. Always remember that the stress level of the shelter cats is much higher than cats experience at home so we cannot expect to interact with them as freely as we do with our own cats.

- To reduce stress it is our policy to pet cats where they tend to groom or rub on each other. By limiting petting to their cheeks, head, neck, ears and under their chins, we are interacting with them in ways that are familiar and easily recognizable as social.
- When petting a cat, avoid the hind quarters, especially on the back just in front of the tail. Some cats like it, some don't and some like it only briefly. Many become overstimulated leading to bites and scratches, often with no warning.
- It's hard to resist rubbing that soft belly fur when a cat flips upside down but please understand that this is a very vulnerable area for a cat. In a stressful shelter environment, touching a vulnerable area is unwise because the cat is likely to respond with a defensive scratch or bite. Always avoid this area when petting.
- Never carry a cat on your shoulder, this exposes your face and chest to potential injury. Even if you feel you know the cat, shelter cats can react fearfully to loud noises, other cats or just the daily commotion and may suddenly strike out. Details on cat carrying are provided below.

#### How to Remove a Cat from a Cage

- Cats may only be removed from their cage by ASAP Cats staff and volunteers. Visitors should be notified of this when greeted along with the hand sanitizing instructions.
- Observe cage cards and signs, not all cats want to or are allowed to be removed. Never forcibly remove a cat from its cage. Contact the Lead Volunteer if you need assistance.
- Volunteers should always use a stool when removing a cat from an upper cage to ensure that you are at the right height for the best control.
- The method for grabbing and removing a cat in a controlled manner is something we call the "football scoop".
- The cat should be approximately parallel to the front of the cage.
- Place an arm over the cat's body and under the upper chest.
- Gently scruff the cat over the neck/shoulder area.
- Lift the cat out of the cage.
- Placing a finger between the cat's front legs gives additional control.
- The scruff may be released if the cat seems relaxed but keep the hand in place.
- A sequence of photos on the next page illustrate the process.
- This process is also to be used for picking up cats on the floor or in the runs.





**Hand over top of body and under chest, lightly scruffed at neck/shoulders.**



**Cat is supported by hand under body and controlled by lightly scruffing.**





**Finger between front legs helps support and control cat. Note cat is no longer scruffed but hand is still in position.**



## How to Carry a Cat

- Cats should be carried in the same positions illustrated for removing them from the cage-arm around and under body and lightly scruffed with a finger between the legs.
- A cat's head may be tucked under the scruffing arm if they seem a little nervous, this will often calm them.
- Note: The cat in the photo looks a little surprised but is just properly scruffed. This cat is normally a little cross-eyed!
- Several things to watch when moving with a cat:
- Aim the cat's face away from other cages, some can become instantly aggressive when confronted eye to eye with another cat.





- Note the cat's body language: is it relaxed, tense or struggling? Adjust the scruffing intensity when necessary for total control.



## Cat Fights

- Never approach cats during a fight.
- Disrupt fights with the water spray bottles located around the shelter Main Room floor and in the Runs.
- If cats get into an altercation with each other, they are going to be agitated and more dangerous to handle. In many cases, this means they will need a few minutes to calm down before you can handle them safely.
- Uninvolved cats in the vicinity may also become agitated so observe their behavior before approaching.
- If a cat remains agitated after a fight, seek assistance from the Lead Volunteer or Wellness staff.
- Any cats involved in an altercation should be placed back in their cages for some “personal time.” It doesn’t matter who started the fight, both cats are required to have some “personal time” for the rest of the day. “Personal time” means that the cat must stay in their cage for the rest of the day—and no visits from volunteers or the public. If an adopter enquires about a cat having personal time, please explain that the cat had a rough day and may still be agitated. The adopter should be encouraged to visit the cat on another day, so they can get a better sense of the cat’s true personality. Place an orange “Personal Time” cage card on the cages.
- All cat/cat altercations and cat/human altercations (even scratches and attempts at scratching/biting) should be documented on the shift report as this information is very important for Leads and volunteers the following day. Please let your Lead Volunteer know if you experience or observe any such altercations.

## Cat Bite Policy

- Cat bites occur in many different situations, but are almost always the result of the human misreading the cat’s communication or behavior just prior to the bite.
- Within the shelter environment, cats experience daily stress. As a result, they may react more fearfully, defensively or territorially than under more “normal” circumstances in a familiar home.
- Some cats give “love bites” when overstimulated. While others object to being touched in certain areas. Sometimes a cat has been taught to play by swatting and biting.
- Regardless of the cause, any bite that breaks the skin must be reported to the Lead Volunteer and a Bite Report must be filed with Animal Services. There are no exceptions and this includes staff and volunteers, as well as the public. There is a mandated 10-day quarantine period for any cat that has bitten—this is not a “punishment” but required under the Public Health Department code.
- It is important to notice and report details about each bite so the behavior of the cat or person can be understood and corrected. Please report the following information to your Lead—whether you were the person bitten, or you observed the circumstances of another person being bitten:



- o Was the cat inside the cage, on the floor, in a run or visiting room?
- o Were there other cats in the vicinity or on the floor?
- o Was the shelter unusually noisy or crowded?
- o What was happening prior to the bite? Feeding, playing, grooming, cage cleaning, returning a cat to the cage?

*Reporting bites is very important so that we can understand the specific needs of a particular cat. Please do not feel bad or embarrassed about reporting a bite—in most situations, we gain very valuable information that can be used to help the cat adjust better to the shelter. Just because a cat has bitten does not mean it will have a “black mark” against it.*



## **Disease and Prevention**

Volunteers are the eyes and ears in regards to the health and welfare of the cats at ASAP Cats Cats. Should you notice any of the following symptoms, please record it on the clipboard next to the vet office.

- Cat not using litter box
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Unusual discharge from eyes or nose
- Sneezing or coughing
- Unusually thin
- Lethargy
- Unusual sensitivity to touch
- Excessive salivation
- Lack or loss of appetite
- Excessive weight gain
- Any other changes in behavior or symptoms that are unusual

Disease prevention is very important in keeping cats healthy and adoptable. The best way to prevent the spread of disease is proper sanitation—of anything that comes into contact with a cat, including hands, toys, bedding, etc. Be sure to either use hand sanitizer or thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water after handling each and every cat. Do not be tempted to share toys between cats and always disinfect surfaces in visiting rooms between cats.

If you have cats at home, and would like to err on the side of caution, you may want to remove and wash the clothing you wear at the shelter as soon as you get home, and possibly have a dedicated pair of shoes for working in the shelter. However, if your cats are healthy and up-to-date on all their vaccinations, the risk that you will transmit a disease to your own pets is very low.



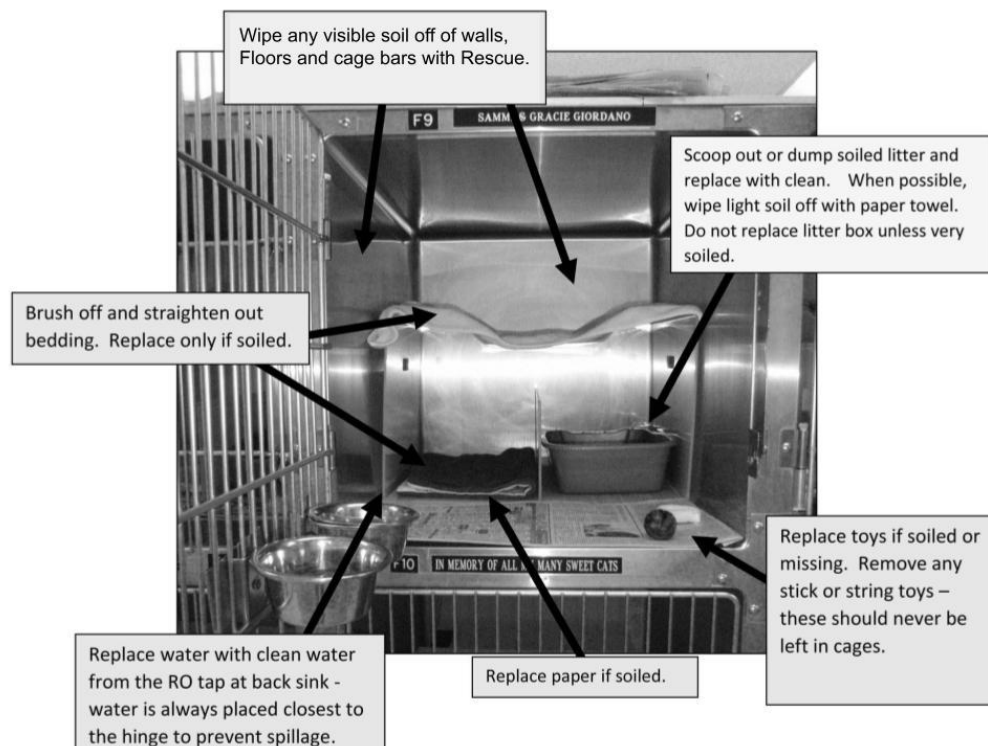
## Section IV – Shelter Cleaning and Daily Maintenance

ASAP Cats Cats volunteers invest a tremendous amount of time and energy to provide a clean and healthy environment for our cats. Sanitizing surfaces and items that the cats come into contact is a very important aspect of disease control. But we also know that when a cat is experiencing a high level of stress, their immune systems are weakened and they are more susceptible to illness. Caring for our cats is a delicate balancing act between sanitization and stress reduction – each one as important as the other –and our procedures have been developed with that in mind.

### Daily Cage Cleaning

Each morning, every occupied cage is tidied or spot cleaned. The purpose of the daily cleaning is not to sanitize the cage but to change litter, straighten bedding, change out soiled items and wipe down surfaces if soiled. We change only what is necessary. There are two very important reasons to minimize daily cleaning:

- Cats thrive on familiarity and routine; they prefer to keep their own belongings, with their own scents, around them. Each time we remove their bedding, toys, or litter box, we are taking away a piece of the world they find familiar and replacing it with something that smells strange.
- Also, the most common method of transmitting disease in a shelter is on smocks, hands, and objects moved from cage to cage and therefore cage cleaning is a high risk activity. Although it sounds counterintuitive, over cleaning is more likely to spread disease than to prevent it.





## Before Opening a Cat's Cage and Prior to Cleaning - Observe Cat

- Look at each cat for health issues. If there is any indication that the cat is receiving medication, on URI watch, or otherwise showing signs of illness, the cat may not be placed in any shared space during cleaning.
- Record issues on medical log or contact your Lead Volunteer or the Wellness staff immediately if a cat is in distress.
- Always “introduce” yourself to the cat before beginning cleaning by offering them a finger to sniff and speaking to them softly. But refrain from cuddling during cleaning – the goal is to minimize handling during this process. Most cats will enjoy visiting much more after cleaning is completed.

## Remove Cat from Cage Only if Necessary

- When possible, leave the cat in their cage during spot cleaning.
- Remove any cat that appears frustrated or attempts to jump out of their cage – “body blocking” them to prevent them from escaping will only increase their frustration and may cause them to respond with a swat or a bite.
- Cats that attempt to “play” or “swat” at your hand or cleaning rag during this process should also be removed from their cage.
- Never force a shy, frightened or resistant cat to come out of their cage. If their cage is too soiled to spot clean and you feel you need assistance please let your Lead Volunteer know.
- If the cat must be removed for safety or efficiency, or the cage is very soiled, you may temporarily place them in a holding cage, Visiting Room, or Run. ***If there is any evidence that the cat has been sneezing or is otherwise receiving medication, please do not put the cat in a visiting room, run or any shared space at any time. Use a holding cage and disinfect it after each use. Note any signs of sneezing or diarrhea on the clipboard outside of the Vet Exam Room.***
- Line the bottom of the holding cage with newspaper before placing a cat inside. Then discard the newspaper and wipe down the cage walls with Rescue when the cat is returned to their own cage.
- Cats are not permitted on the Main Room floor during cage cleaning (kittens are never permitted on the floor).
- Observe all handling/carrying procedures noted in Cat Handling Section of this manual.

## Change or Clean Soiled Items

- Never place any items removed from the cage on the top of the cages or directly on the floor. A clean sheet of newspaper can be placed on the floor and any items temporarily removed from the cage during cleaning can be placed on the paper.
- If cage is lightly soiled, use a wash cloth sprayed with water to wipe any light soil from cage walls. Be sure to remove any nasal discharge from walls or any visible debris from cage doors as well. You may use a rag dampened with Rescue if necessary (never spray





disinfectant into a cage with a cat inside). Put any dirty rags in the dirty laundry basket.

- Discard and replace newspaper if soiled. To prevent cats from standing on cold metal surfaces, all exposed surfaces of the cage floor should be covered with 2 layers of newspaper as shown in “Setting up a Cage”. However please do not place newspaper under Crijó Crib – it is very hard to remove while the cat is in the cage.
- Inspect bedding. If it is dry and unsoiled, refold or straighten and replace in cage. If there is litter dust on it, brush carefully into trash but it isn’t necessary to replace it with a clean bed. Please do not shake bedding near other cages or shared areas. If soiled, place bedding in dirty laundry basket and replace with a clean bed. Please limit bedding to two beds per cage (3 for cats sharing a cage). Heavily soiled bedding must be rinsed in the “back end” sink before being placed in the laundry.
- Remove and dump litter box contents if soiled, trying to minimize dust. You may conserve litter by using the used cardboard wet food dish to scoop out just the wet litter or fecal material rather than dumping the entire box. To prevent disease transmission please do not use another cat’s used food dish or rest or touch litter box on edge of trash or cart at any time. Refill litter box and replace in cage. If the litter box itself is slightly soiled, spray with a little disinfectant and use a paper towel to wipe out first. If heavily soiled, place the dirty box in the “back end” sink and use a clean box.
- All cats should have toys and/or a stuffed animal in the cage. Replace soiled toys if necessary. Hard plastic toys are cleaned in the “front end” sink. Soft toys go into the laundry basket. Clean toys are stored in the cabinets in the kitchen. Wand toys are interactive toys and should never be left unattended inside a cage. ***Please immediately remove any wand toys you find left in cages or hanging on the sides of cages.***
- Dump the water dish, rinse at the sink and refill with clean reverse osmosis water from the filtered water tap. Please fill the water dish to approximately 2/3 full to prevent spillage and allow us to monitor water intake.

***Disinfect hands before moving to the next cage.***

## **After All Cages Have Been Cleaned:**

- Clean and restock cart as described in the following section and return to the Store Room.
- Sweep all debris from floors. This is an ongoing chore that must be performed many times during the day to keep the environment clean and appealing to the public, as well as healthy for the cats.
- When finished cleaning, change your smock and wash your hands with soap for 15 seconds before handling any cats. Cage cleaning is the dirtiest time of day and also the time when you are most likely to spread germs!



## Cleaning and Restocking Cleaning Cart

Once the morning shift has completed cleaning, the carts should be restocked before putting them back in the Store Room.

### **Remove Soiled Items from the Cart**

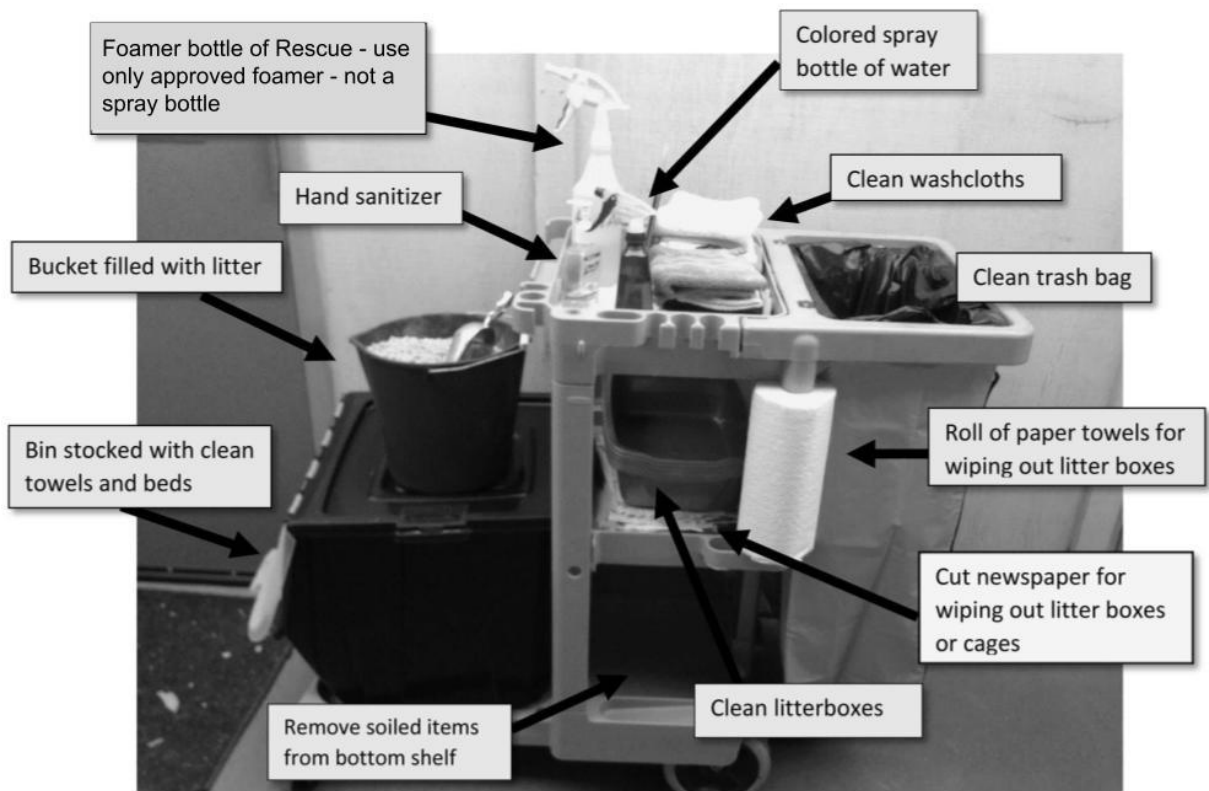
- Place dirty laundry into hamper or washer being careful to shake any litter or waste out beforehand. If the bedding is heavily soiled, it may be necessary to use the “back-end” sink sprayer to remove any remaining fecal material prior to putting the bedding in the laundry.
- Unzip the trash bag container and remove trash bag. Carry trash to tan dumpster outside the shelter (the blue one is for recyclable material).
- Using Rescue, wipe off any shelves that are dirty including the lip around the trash bag.

### **Change Your Smock and Sanitize Your Hands (yes, again)!**

- *Do not handle clean bedding with a dirty smock or hands please.*

### **Restock Cart with Clean Items**

- Place a clean garbage bag in the zippered pouch—the supply of garbage bags is located on the shelf above the litter barrels in the Store Room.
- Place a supply of fresh washcloths on the top shelf of the cart.
- Fill the bedding bin at the end of the cart with an assortment of clean bedding.
- Restock litter pail.
- Restock clean litter pans on second shelf.
- Check level of Rescue in foamer bottle – if necessary, refill from the larger mixed container located on the counter at the back end of the Main Room. Do not mix individual foamer bottles of Rescue from concentrate.





## Return Cart to Storage Room

- Check for hitchhikers first!! While cats are not allowed on the Main Room floor during cleaning, it's always a good idea to check your cart—as we all know, cats are smarter than we are!



## Vacated Cage Cleaning (Super Clean)

When a cat is adopted or moved to a new cage, their vacated cage must be completely sanitized before being prepared for another cat. This means that every surface, including the cage doors (bars, dish rings, latches, card holders and hinges), must be carefully scrubbed with disinfectant and the disinfectant must be left on for the appropriate amount of time. Currently we are using Rescue which must stay wet on a surface for at least 10 minutes to effectively sanitize.

### **Strip all Item from Cage**

- Please do not start stripping items out of a cage unless you expect to be able to complete the entire cleaning process. It is confusing when a cage is left partially stripped or empty but not completely disinfected. If you are called away during the process, please clearly mark the cage by placing a “Clean Me Please!” cage sign on the cage with the date written on it.
- Remove all bedding and toys and put directly into laundry bins.
- Remove litterbox and food dishes and dispose of contents. Place litter box and food dishes in appropriate “front end” and “back end” sinks to be cleaned.
- Remove Crijos Crib – Place crib on the ground next to the “back end” sink until it can be cleaned.
- Discard newspaper from the cage.
- Remove any hanging tags and place in bleach water. Any laminated cards should be wiped with Rescue and placed in cabinet by the “front end” sink.

### **Sanitize Cage**

- Take a small bucket of Rescue from the larger supply. Take only enough to clean the ONE cage at a time.
- Spray all interior surfaces of cage with Rescue foamer bottle. You must also use a bowl of Rescue for deep cleaning because you cannot adequately clean the door or edges of the cage with a foam sprayer without getting it into another cage (where a cat might be).
- Dip a clean dry rag into the small individual bowl (or small bucket) of Rescue and squeeze out gently until it is wet but not dripping. Wipe cage door – up and down the bars and across the bars on both the inside and outside. Make sure you clean the hinges, latches, dish rings and card holders.
- Scrub all walls of the interior, including ceiling of cage. Run hand over surface to be sure nothing is left on walls. Nasal discharge can be very hard to see and remove, but you can easily feel it on the stainless steel surface.
- Leave cage surface wet for at least 10 minutes. Rinsing is not necessary but you may want to dry it.
- Clean Crib. All cribs should be cleaned outside on drying rack. Spray all surfaces with Rescue foamer. Please make sure all sides are cleaned and all debris is scrubbed off. Leave wet with cleaner for at least 10 minutes, wipe dry, and then put in a clean empty cage. Please do not store cribs on top of cages at any time. Also please do not stand cribs on end – this places



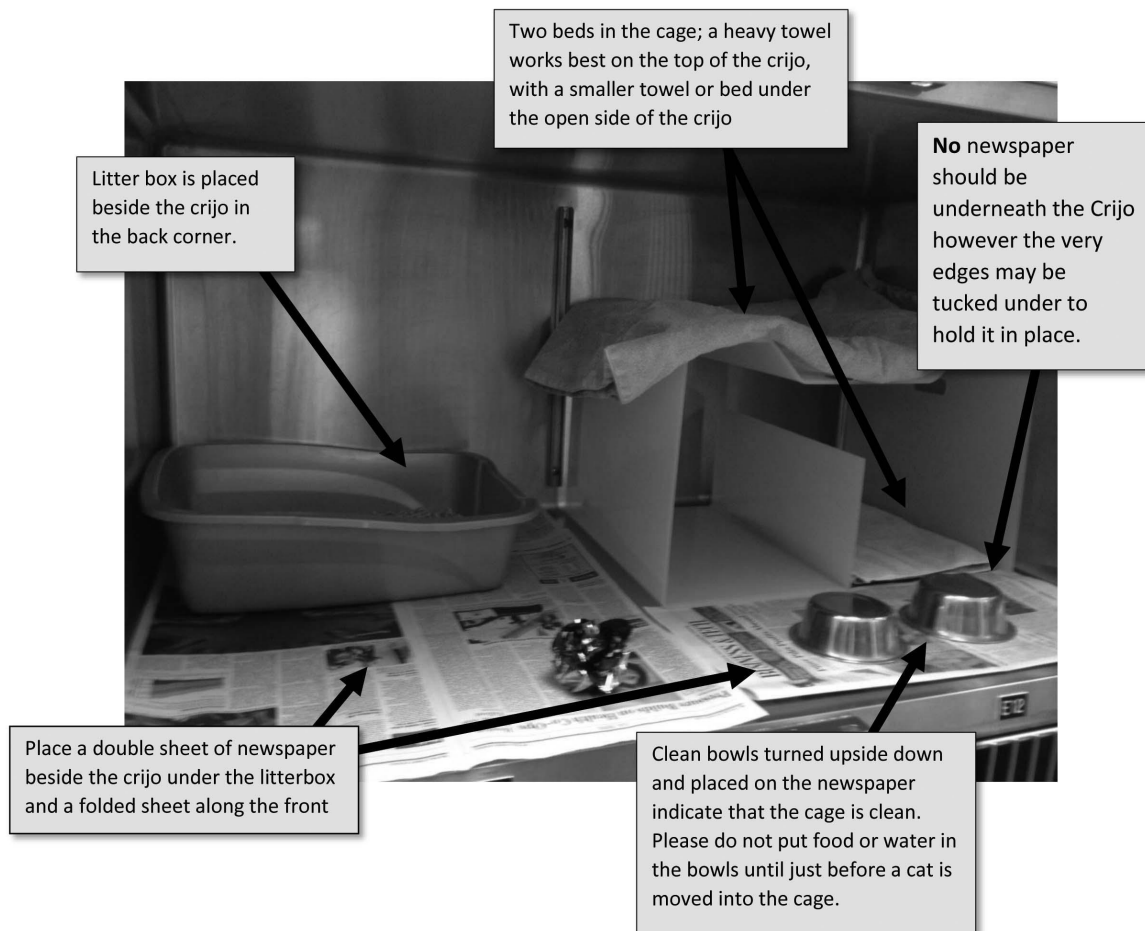
too much stress on the material and makes them prone to breaking. Please do not leave cribs out on drying rack in sun for prolonged periods as that causes damage to crib material.



## Cage Set Up

Only a few empty cages should be set up unless they are to be occupied immediately.

- Place Crijo inside of cage.
- Place 2 sheets of newspaper on the empty side of the cage and one folded sheet across the cage in front of the Crijo to cover all exposed metal. Do not place newspaper underneath the Crijo because it is too difficult to remove during cleaning.
- Place one large towel on top of Crijo and one smaller bed underneath the Crijo.
- Fill medium or large sized litter box with about 1 inch of litter and place it on the papered side of the cage.
- Place 1 ball or mouse toy and 1 soft stuffed toy in cage. Toys are located in cabinets in the kitchen.
- Take 2 stainless steel bowls from the kitchen cabinet. If the **cage is not to be occupied** immediately, flip clean bowls over and place in front of cage to indicate it is clean.
- If the **cage is to be occupied** immediately, place the water bowl in the ring closest to the door hinges and fill no more than 2/3 full to prevent spillage. Place the food dish in the other ring.
- If more than one cat is going to be occupying the cage, use a food and water dish for each





## Ongoing Cleaning

### Common Areas

There are several common areas shared by cats during the day that need to be continually cleaned:

Runs, Visiting Rooms and Main Room floor.

- The Runs and Main Room floor must have litter boxes and water bowls. These must be cleaned daily or more frequently as needed—any soiled litter box should be immediately swapped with a clean one. Bedding should be replaced daily.
- The Visiting Rooms must be disinfected between each cat or kitten(s). It is very important to disinfect all horizontal surfaces, as well as change the litter pan if soiled.
- If a cat or kitten has a cage sign that indicates they are receiving medication or are on URI watch, they are not permitted to be in any of the common areas including Runs, Visiting Rooms or Main Room floor. Note: Kittens are **never** allowed to run around the Main Room floor!

### Other Areas Needing Regular Cleaning

There are many surfaces that need to be disinfected at LEAST three times a week with Rescue spray or wipes:

- Doorknobs throughout shelter in all of the rooms
- Phones
- Faucets
- Towel dispensers
- All countertops and sinks, including inside the Main Room, kitchen area, breezeway, as well as in the outer rooms
- Window sills throughout shelter
- Lobby counter and adoption counseling table





## **Feeding**

Any volunteer engaged in feeding the cats and kittens at the shelter must have a special training—this can be given by their Lead, but it is very important that untrained volunteers not attempt to feed the cats.

ASAP Cats Cats cats are fed twice a day. Most adult cats are fed dry food in the morning and wet food in the afternoon. Kittens are fed both wet and dry at both meals. Some cats require special diets for health reasons (weight loss or maintenance, allergies, and prescription diets) so please be sure to check all cage tags and the Special Feeding Logs before feeding a cat.

We are very careful not to overfeed. Although it is tempting to equate food with love, we are actually harming their health as well as their chances of adoption. Adopters prefer smaller cats and routinely pass over overweight cats. “Fat cats” sit in cages for months on end. So please watch portion size.

## **Preparing for Feeding**

- The feeding cart stored in the Kitchen and contains the dry food for both adults and kittens.
- Canned (wet) food is stored in the cupboard just inside the Kitchen. Rinse and place empty cans in the recycle can located in the kitchen.
- To prevent unnecessary waste, check the refrigerator for leftovers before opening new cans, and store daily leftovers there.
- If you open a new can and don't use all of it, be sure to write the date on it.
- Stainless steel food bowls are for dry food and water only and should be examined and replaced if dirty.
- Canned (wet) food is served in the small cardboard trays found in the upper cabinet next to the “front end” sink.
- Always check the Special Feeding Logs, hanging on the food storage cabinets before feeding. It is helpful to feed all cats with special diets before feeding the main population to prevent mistakes.
- Make sure that ALL cats are fed including any living in the Lobby, Runs, or Breezeway. Cats in the outer rooms (New Arrivals, ISO, and Sick Bay) should be feed by a volunteer who has been trained to work in those areas but please verify that it is done.

## **AM Feeding**

- Adult cats get 1/3 cup of Adult Science Diet dry food.
- Kittens under the age of 6 months get 1/3 cup Kitten Science Diet dry food and 1/3 can of canned kitten food (5.5 oz can).
- Remember to feed the Lobby Cat, as well as any cats housed in the Runs or Breezeway cages.



## PM Feeding

- Adult cats get 1/3 can of Science Diet canned food
- Kittens under the age of 6 months get 1/3 can of kitten canned food (5.5 oz can) and more dry food if the bowls are empty. Do not keep dumping new food on top of old because the food underneath becomes damp and sticky.
- Remember to feed the Lobby Cat, as well as any cats housed in the Runs or Breezeway cages.

## Loss of Appetite in Cats

- Some cats are too fearful to eat when first transferred to their new cage in the Main Room; however, for most, a little company and food placed directly in front of them is enough to entice them to eat.
- If you notice that a cat isn't eating their food even with encouragement, please do not offer alternative food choices without checking with the Wellness staff. Abrupt changes in diet are one of the most common causes of diarrhea and vomiting in the shelter.
- This is usually a very temporary condition, ***but always report a cat who will not eat at all to the Lead Volunteer and/or record it on the vet clipboard for the Wellness staff.***
- Do not make changes or notes on the Special Feeding Logs unless specifically instructed to do so by the Wellness Team.

## Treats

Because weight management is an ongoing problem, treats are used as “rewards” for desirable behavior rather than as “snacks”. Additionally, if too many treats are given, they lose their power as a reward. Volunteers are encouraged to give cats 1 or 2 treats in the following situations:

- When returning a cat to its cage so it is seen as a positive action, not a punishment.
- To reward a shy cat for interacting positively.
- After cleaning their cage, to give a positive end to a potentially stressful experience.
- By the Behavior Team in training situations.



## Laundry

Laundry is an ongoing task and everyone is expected to pitch in at times.

### Laundry Carts

- Laundry carts are on wheels and move around during the day. They will be found in the kitchen area or in the Store Room.
- Dirty laundry should be placed in the labeled blue cart.
- Clean laundry goes into the labeled white cart.
- There are also a few plastic laundry baskets that may be used, please pay attention to the labels which designate “clean” or “dirty”.



### Washing

- There is a large commercial washing machine located in the Store Room.
- This commercial washing machine should only be run when really full but not packed tight.
- Volunteers will need to receive training prior to operating this machine.
- The soap and bleach automatically dispense, do not add more.
- Do not change the front panel settings.
- Close the door and make sure it latches.
- Press the “start” button twice and the machine takes care of the rest.
- The wash cycle takes approximately 30 minutes.
- Please make sure you **wash your hands** after handling dirty laundry.

### Drying

- There are two commercial stacked driers in the Store Room.
- There are two lint filters which need to be checked **before each load of laundry**. Note: These filters need to be pulled ALL the way out to clean the lint captured at the very back of the filter.
- Load with the wet laundry and press the “start” button.
- The dry cycle takes approximately 15 minutes.
- Check to make sure all laundry is dry before removing.

### Folding

- Make sure all items are thoroughly dry, sometimes the larger towels are still a little damp.
- There are folding areas for clean laundry located in the Kitchen and the storage room.
- Fold smocks and place on the appropriate shelves.



- Fold large towels, hand towels, and washcloths and place in their designated kitchen cabinets.
- Return toys to the containers in the kitchen cabinet.
- Cat beds and excess towels can be stored on the appropriate shelves in the Store Room.

## Special Surgery Items

All green surgery laundry (drapes, wraps and towels) are washed in the washer and dryer in the Kitchen—not in the commercial washer. ***Do not add bleach***—these items are sterilized in an autoclave so bleach is unnecessary and damages the fabric.



## Washing Food Dishes, Toys and Litterboxes

### Dishwasher—Food/Water Bowls

All metal and ceramic dishes should be washed in the dishwasher. It is a high temperature commercial machine and is more effective at sanitizing than handwashing.

- Load dishwasher as shown on the front of the machine to maximize load size.
- Do not put toys and plastic items in the commercial dishwasher—they must be washed in the “Front End” sink because the dishwasher water temperature is too hot and can damage them.
- Please check display panel – if either the “recharge” or “rinse aid” light is on, do not start dishwasher until the softener salt or rinse aid has been refilled.
  - Running without sufficient salt or rinse aid leaves heavy mineral build up on both the dishwasher and dishes.
  - Salt and rinse aid are to be added by specially trained staff only; notify Lead Volunteer if little red lights are on.
- Use only **powdered** detergent. Follow instructions on the detergent container for amount.
- Make **sure** the On/Off button is pushed in.
- Make sure the knob is set to “Normal-Plus”—it never needs to be changed to any other setting.
- Press “Start”.
- Flip the clean/dirty indicator to clean on starting the machine.
- Unload dishes and store in cupboard. Flip the clean/dirty indicator back to dirty after unloading.

### Toys, Cage Tags, Plastic Items - “Front End” Sink

- Hard toys, cage tags, and any plastic items should be washed at the “Front End” sink.
- Fill the plastic container on the left side with warm soapy water.
- Fill the plastic container on the right with warm water and add approximately ¼ cup of bleach.
- Wash all items in the soapy water and scrub with sponge. Rinse with water.
- Place items into the bleach solution and allow to sit for 10-15 minutes.
- Thoroughly rinse bleach solution with water.
- Once removed from bleach, do not use the rag, sponge or wash water to wash off the bleach—this will contaminate the item.
- Place items in drying rack, dry and put away if time permits.
- Soft toys can be placed in a mesh bag and added to the laundry for the commercial washer.
- Any toys with feathers or fur should be cleaned with Rescue rather than bleach.
- Spray dry toy with Rescue to soak.
- Leave wet for 5 minutes.
- Rinse cleaner off.



- Place in drying rack and put away when completely dry.

## **Litter Boxes, Heavily Soiled Bedding - “Back End” Sink**

- Litter box cleaning is an ongoing task and all volunteers are expected to participate. Please be vigilant about checking for boxes that have been left to be cleaned.
- All litter boxes are to be cleaned in the “Back End” sinks in the breezeway.
- The sink has a high power spray that should spray only warm water.
- Spray soiled bedding until all loose matter is removed and place in the dirty laundry bin.
- Spray litter boxes to remove any signs of litter, urine and fecal matter. Use the scrubbers dipped in a Rescue solution to lightly scrub all surfaces.
- Be sure to remove ALL organic material from litter pans to prevent contaminating the entire bleach barrel.
- Place all litter boxes in the barrel, make sure they are not nested tightly so all surfaces are exposed to the bleach. Press the ‘Start’ button on the wall timer until it begins to countdown from 15:00.
- Once the 15 minute cycle is complete, remove litter boxes and place upside down on the drying rack.
- If the number of boxes exceeds the capacity of the rack, they may be dried with towels to make room for the next batch.

## **Crijo Crib Cleaning**

Crijo Cribs are the acrylic shelf units that are placed in the individual cat cages to separate eating, sleeping and litter areas, as well as create perching areas. When they are removed from a cage, they should be cleaned at the “back end” sink.

- Using a foamer bottle, coat entire surface of crib with Rescue.
- Scrub to make sure all debris is removed.
- Place on drying rack.
- Store unused cribs in empty cages or on top of kitchen cabinets. Do not leave cribs on the drying rack indefinitely or stand them vertically as they can easily crack.

***\*Please do not store cribs on top of the cages at any time.***



## **Afternoon Check-Out Tasks**

Tasks are designed to start at the lobby and work as you walk through the shelter with the exception of returning to the office to hang up the phone and sign out:

- Flip the Open/Closed sign
- Check for phone messages
- Close and lock windows and doors
- Make sure collars have been removed from cats and hung on cage doors
- Check all water bowls
- Return cats to cages from Runs
- If rain is predicted, remove bedding and litter boxes from runs
- Check that Visiting Rooms are clean
- Empty yellow trashcans on main floor
- Check and clean sinks and floor litter boxes
- Empty trash cans in vet room and kitchen
- Drain Kitchen bleach water
- Empty Kitchen recycle can
- Start last load of laundry. Turn off all dryers
- Check windows and water in ISO and New Arrivals
- Make sure cleaning carts are prepared
- Empty smock pockets, check notes
- Hang up phone
- Make sure adoption info is recorded in binder
- Sign out/turn off lights
- Final check of exterior doors and windows



## What to do when there's nothing to do at ASAP Cats Cats

Once the basic chores are completed, there are many ongoing tasks to ensure that the shelter is kept clean and also attractive for the public. The following list includes some of these ongoing tasks and everyone is encouraged to pitch in. But remember that spending a little quality time with the cats is equally important so alternating time between a little of both is recommended.

- SOCIALIZE WITH CATS and mark on behavior board.
- Check litter boxes in cages for cleanliness
- Check all floor/run litter boxes for cleanliness
- Check water bowls—fill or change if dirty
- Check runs for clean fresh water
- Clean Visiting Rooms
- Straighten bedding in cages so the cats can rest more comfortably
- Check beds in runs, straighten, change if dirty
- Sweep runs
- Sweep Main Room, Kitchen, Lobby floors
- Mop Main Room floor
- Check laundry, fold clean laundry, put away in cupboards
- Check, clean and stock all carts
- Restock canned food in kitchen cabinet
- Wash dishes
- Clip nails (ask Wellness Staff for guidance)
- Wipe down in and around all sinks
- Dry any litter boxes on rack and put in the store room
- Clean and disinfect any cat carriers in the breezeway
- Take extra cat carriers to storage shed
- Wash windows and front door
- Spot clean around door knobs and on walls
- Organize drawers and cabinets
- Roll newspaper





## **Adoptions**

### **Adoption Procedure**

- When potential adopters visit ASAP Cats Cats, it's very important that appropriate matches are made with the cats that are best suited to their home and family. Because this is so important, this "matchmaking" role is reserved for Lead volunteers and specially trained Adoption Counselors. Only under the supervision and direction of the Lead Volunteer, should regular volunteers help a potential adopter find cats that will fit their particular situation.
- To facilitate the matchmaking process, the adopter can fill out the first page of the Adoption Application—the information here can assist in finding just the right cat for them. The second page is the Adoption Contract that will be completed during the adoption counseling process.
- The Lead Volunteer or Adoption Counselor will verify that the adopter can have a cat at their residence. The Lead or Adoption Counselor will then complete the adoption screening/counseling process, including reviewing the cat's veterinary record.

### **Adoption Fee**

- The fee to adopt a cat or kitten is established by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and is paid directly to Animal Services. ASAP Cats Cats does not receive any adoption fees. The current adoption fee is \$75 for both adult cats and kittens, but is subject to change.
- Senior cats, those 10 years of age or older, are eligible for a reduced senior cat adoption fee of \$40.
- Reduced fees are sometimes offered for "special" cats, usually those requiring an experienced owner due to minor behavior or health issues. These reduced fees are negotiated with Animal Services by ASAP Cats Cats's Executive Director.
- Special adoption events are held throughout the year, and cats and kittens are offered at reduced or no fee.

### **What Makes ASAP Cats Cats Cats So Special—it's a Package Deal!**

Every cat or kitten that is adopted from ASAP Cats Cats receives the following:

- Spay or neuter
- Flea treatment
- All age appropriate vaccinations, including FVRCP and rabies for cats 4 months and older.
- Deworming and parasite treatment
- Health evaluation, including testing for Feline Leukemia (FeLV) for all cats/kittens and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) for all cats 6 months or older. Cats thought to be 10 years or older receive a full blood panel evaluation.



- Medical treatment for two weeks post-adoption by ASAP Cats Cats's Wellness staff.
- Behavior evaluation
- Cardboard cat carrier
- Microchip—each cat and kitten adopted from ASAP Cats Cats is microchipped and registered for the rest of its life.



## Donations

- People often stop by with donations, if they are bringing in items, ***always thank them and offer them a receipt***. If a receipt is needed ask your Lead Volunteer for assistance. Place items by the Lobby desk and notify Lead Volunteer.
- If someone wants to make a monetary donation there are a few options. All the options are listed in our donation envelopes. There are some kept on the Lobby counter. Please involve your Lead Volunteer so they can provide information about the different options. ***Please encourage every monetary donor to fill out the information inside our donation envelope—this will ensure that we can send them a thank you acknowledgement letter/tax receipt***. If a donor hands you a completed donation envelope, you may place it in the metal donation box attached to the side of the yellow cabinet.

## Lobby Sales

The ASAP Cats Cats lobby store carries many of the supplies that an adopter might need for their new pet. We stock new items such as litter boxes, food and water dishes, and toys as well as gently used items such as cat trees. Additionally, a variety of ASAP Cats Cats logo items are available for sale. All prices are marked either on the item or listed on a wall sign. Prices already include tax. We accept cash or checks but are unable to accept credit card payments for purchases at this time. All purchases should be rung up by leads or volunteers who have been trained to use the register.



## **ASAP Cats Cats Special Programs**

### **Working Cats/Alternative Placements**

Not all cats have been socialized with humans or are suited to adoption into a traditional home environment. Feral, semi-feral, or less social cats which have had very limited human interaction or tend to not interact well with people may be recommended for our Working Cat/Alternative Placement Program. Also known as “ranch cats”, these are working cats, ideally keeping barns or warehouses free from vermin. Other “alternative placements” include warehouses, offices, wineries, as well as many other situations where a less traditional housecat is desired. All adopters must still provide a safe environment for their cats, including an enclosed area at night, as well as food and water daily.

### **Foster Program**

ASAP Cats Cats has operated a successful foster program since 1992. Each year, volunteers open their hearts and homes to provide temporary care to hundreds of felines from young orphaned kittens to hospice fosters who need a quiet home to spend their last months. Fostering can be a wonderful way to teach children how to handle animals and can also help a family decide whether they are ready to take on the commitment of adopting a pet.

#### **Our Foster Groups**

***Kitten Fosters*** –ASAP Cats Cats foster parents care for kittens of all ages and levels of socialization. Kittens remain in a foster home until they are at least 8 weeks old and over 2 lbs.

- **Orphaned Neonate or Bottle-Feeder Kittens** ranging in age from newborn to about 4 weeks old. These kittens are fostered by volunteers with prior kitten fostering experience.
- **Weaned Kittens** over five weeks old and eating solid food.
- **Tiny Lions** focuses on kittens which have had little social contact with humans. Special training is offered to fosters interested in socializing these kittens.
- **Pregnant Queens or Queens with Litters**

***Adult Fosters*** –ASAP Cats Cats foster parents also provide temporary homes for adult cats who do not thrive in a shelter environment or need medical or behavioral treatment.

- **Medical Fosters** recovering from an injury or surgery. During their convalescence, these cats will experience less stress in a home environment than in the shelter environment, facilitating their recovery.
- **Hospice Fosters** with a medical condition which prevents them from meeting ASAP Cats Cats’s criteria for adoptability, but still experiencing a good quality of life. Although this can be an emotionally challenging assignment for a foster, providing a final loving home can also be one of the most rewarding.



- **Behavior Fosters** for whom the shelter environment is intolerable. To more accurately assess these cats, they are sometimes placed in temporary foster care so that they can be observed in a less stressful environment.

## **At-Risk Feline Program**

Throughout Santa Barbara County there are areas with free-roaming cats—ranging from just a few to over 50 in some cases. Unless spayed/neutered, these colonies can reproduce at an exponential rate, with high kitten mortality and disease transmission. ASAP Cats Cats's At-Risk Feline Program is an outreach program that works within the community and traps these cats, spay or neuters them, and then releases them either in the location they came from or another location. This community service prevents hundreds of unwanted kittens every year.

The At-Risk Feline Program also works to remove cats from possible hoarding situations where there are too many cats receiving low quality care, as well as round-up unaltered kittens being sold or given away on Craigslist.

## **Feline Behavior Program**

High priority cats having a particularly hard time at the shelter are assigned to the Feline Behavior Team for evaluation and the development of individualized enrichment plans. Volunteers participating in this program commit to focused training and commit to working additional hours each week at the shelter. The program focuses on reward-based training techniques and the newest science-based socialization methods. ASAP Cats Cats is at the leading edge nationally with the incorporation of the Feline Behavior Program into all aspects of shelter management.

## **Adoption Support Program**

The goal of ASAP Cats Cats's adoption program is to find the ideal match between human and cat—ensuring a lifelong connection and forever home! To support this, the Adoption Support Team reaches out to new adopters to answer questions and provide support to ensure that they and their new cat are doing well. Addressing questions or concerns early in the process helps ensure that there are no ongoing issues that could escalate into the return of the cat to the shelter. However, occasionally there are significant concerns regarding the match between cat-human-household that may warrant the cat returning to ASAP Cats Cats—in these cases, it's important to be proactive and support both the adopter, as well as ensure that the cat is safely returned. Volunteers receive special training for this program—and also work closely with the Feline Behavior Program to refer questions and cases to volunteers with more specialized training in feline behavior.



## Appendix I – Basic Cat Behavior

The following information was compiled by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and offers some tips on what a cat's behavior may be telling you.

### **Vocalizing: Something to talk about**

You'll learn a lot from your cat's wide vocabulary of chirps and meows. You'll know when it's time to get up (at least in your cat's opinion), when your cat's feeling affectionate, or when your cat's feeling threatened or is in pain.

**Meow is an all-purpose word.** This can be a greeting ("Hey, how ya doin'?), a command ("I want up, I want down, More food now"), an objection ("Touch me at your own risk"), an announcement ("Here's your mouse"). Some cats even walk around the house meowing to themselves.

**Chirps and trills** are how a mother cat tells her kittens to follow her. Kitty wants you to follow him, usually to his food bowl. If you have more than one cat, they will often converse with each other this way.

**The purr is a sign of contentment.** Cats purr whenever they're happy, even while they're eating. Sometimes, however, a cat may purr when he's anxious or sick, using the purr as a way to comfort himself, like a child sucking his thumb.

**Growling, hissing, or spitting** indicates a cat that is annoyed, frightened, angry or aggressive. Leave this cat alone.

**The yowl or howl is a loud, drawn-out meow.** Your cat is in some kind of distress—stuck in a closet, looking for you, in pain. In unneutered and unsprayed cats, it's part of the mating behavior (and very annoying). Elderly cats sometimes suffer from cognitive disorder (dementia) and may howl because they're disoriented. Screaming means your cat is in terrible pain.

**Chattering, chittering, twittering** is the strange noise your cat makes when he's sitting in the window watching birds or squirrels. Some experts think that this is an exaggeration of the "killing bite," when a cat grabs his prey by the neck and works his teeth through the bones to snap them.



## Body language

Pay attention to her eyes, ears, body and tail—they're all part of the story.

### Ears

- Forward: alert, interested, happy
- Backward, sideways, flat ("airplane ears"): irritable, angry, frightened
- Swiveling: attentive, listening to every little sound

## When the Ears Speak, Listen!



1) Relaxed and Happy



2) Alert, Listening Intently



3) Agitated and Nervous







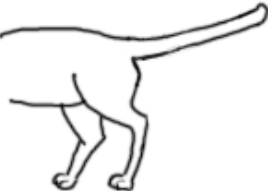







4) Frightened, in Attack Mode



## Tail

- Erect, fur flat: alert, inquisitive, happy
- Fur standing on end: angry, frightened
- Held very low or tucked between legs: insecure, anxious
- Thrashing back and forth: agitated. The faster the tail, the madder the cat
- Straight up, quivering: excited, really happy.

## The Telltale Tail

friendly and content 	non-threatening, unsure 	derisive 
friendly, but unsure 	amicable, not fearful or aggressive 	defensive aggression 
angry 	potentially aggressive 	submissive 
very happy to see you 	excited, angry or irritable 	alert, interested 

catsmeowblog.com





## Eyes

- Pupils constricted: offensively aggressive; content
- Pupils dilated: nervous, submissive (somewhat dilated); defensively aggressive (fully dilated); playful

## Body

- Back arched, fur standing on end: frightened, angry
- Back arched, fur flat: welcoming your touch
- Lying on back, purring: very relaxed, may be asking for a tummy rub
- Lying on back, growling, upset, ready to strike

## Rubbing

When your cat rubs her chin and body against you, she's telling you she loves you, right? Well, sort of. What she's really doing is marking her territory. You'll notice that she also rubs the chair, the door, her toys, everything in sight. She's telling everyone that this is her stuff, including you. But she does love you, too.

## Kneading

In the cat world, this is called "making biscuits," because the cat works her paws on a soft surface as if it she's kneading bread dough. This is a holdover from kittenhood, when a nursing kitten massaged her mother's teats to make milk flow. When your cat does this, she is really happy.

## The Flehman response

You've surely noticed times when your cat, while sniffing your shoe perhaps, lifts his head, opens his mouth slightly, curls back his lips, and squints his eyes. He's not making a statement about how your shoe smells, he's gathering more information.

Your cat's sense of smell is so important to him that he actually has an extra olfactory organ that very few other creatures have—the Jacobson's organ. It's located on the roof of his mouth behind his front teeth and is connected to the nasal cavity.

When your cat gets a whiff of something really fascinating, he opens his mouth and inhales so that the scent molecules flow over the Jacobson's organ. This intensifies the odor and provides more information about the object he's sniffing. What he does with that information, well, we'll never know.



## In the mood

Is your cat playing, meditating, or having a bad day? Here's how you can tell:

**Content:** Sitting or lying down, eyes half-closed, narrow pupils, tail mostly still, ears forward, purring. A really happy cat will often knead on a soft surface.

**Playful:** Ears forward, tail up, whiskers forward, pupils somewhat dilated. Playing is hunting behavior; your cat may stalk his prey (a toy, a housemate, you), and then crouch down with his rear end slightly raised. A little wiggle of the butt, then ... pounce! Kitty grabs his prey, bites it, wrestles it the floor, and kicks it with his hind feet. His toy is now dead.

**Irritated, over-stimulated:** Pupils dilating, ears turning back, tail twitching or waving. The cat may growl or put her teeth on you as a warning to cease and desist. Intense play can quickly turn to overstimulation in some cats, resulting in biting and scratching.

**Nervous, anxious:** Ears sideways or back, pupils dilating, tail low or tucked between legs. The cat may slink through the house close to the floor, looking for somewhere to hide. He may turn his face to the wall to shut the world out.

**Frightened, startled:** Think Halloween cat. Ears back and flat against head, whiskers back, back arched, fur standing on end, tail erect or low. May yowl, growl, hiss, and spit.

**Defensive:** Crouched position, ears flattened, whiskers back, tail between legs or wrapped around body, pupils dilated. May meow loudly, growl, hiss, and spit.

**Angry, aggressive:** Ears back, pupils very constricted, tail up or down with fur standing on end. An aggressive cat will stare down the other cat and growl or yowl until the other cat gives way. Cats don't really want to fight; they prefer standoffs, but this can progress to fighting if one of the cats doesn't back down.



## Appendix II - Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

### FIV Facts

- The Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a slow virus that affects a cat's immune system over a period of years.
- FIV is a cat-only disease and cannot be spread to humans or other non-felines.
- FIV+ cats often live long, healthy, and relatively normal lives with no symptoms at all. However, some FIV+ cats have weakened immune systems making them vulnerable to a variety of infections and health-related issues.
- FIV is not easily passed between cats. It cannot be spread casually in litter boxes, water and food bowls, or when snuggling and playing. It is rarely spread from a mother to her kittens.
- The virus is almost always spread through deeply penetrating bite wounds. (Bite wounds of this kind are extremely rare, except in free-roaming, unneutered cats.)
- A spayed or neutered cat, in a stable home, is extremely unlikely to infect other companion cats. **ASAP Cats will consider adoption of FIV+ cats to non-FIV homes if the home is found to be a stable household.**
- FIV+ cats should be kept as healthy as possible. These cats should be kept indoors and free from stress. They need a high-quality diet, and even minor health issues should be treated as soon as they arise.



## Appendix III – ASAP Cats Cats Volunteer Position Descriptions

### **Title: Shelter Volunteer**

**Supervisor:** Lead Volunteers

**Schedule:** At least 4 hours per week between the hours of 9:00am – 5:00pm

**Term:** 6 months minimum commitment

**Summary:** Shelter Volunteers participate in routine cat care and upkeep of the facility, which may include cleaning cat cages, feeding, laundry, and housekeeping details every day of the year.

#### **Essential Duties:**

- Cleaning cages, emptying and cleaning litter pans, and cleaning food bowls (50%)
- Grooming, petting, and socializing the cats (20%).
- Laundry for bedding, towels, smocks, and cleaning supplies (10%).
- Feeding the cats and replacing the water (10%).
- General housekeeping duties such as sweeping, washing windows, organizing, etc. (10%).
- Other duties as assigned.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Should be able to work independently for 3-4 hours at a time, as well as work within a group atmosphere with other volunteers and/or staff.
- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet must recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities, and ask for help when needed.
- Must maintain an active email account.
- Must be at least 12 years of age. A parent/adult partner volunteer must accompany any volunteer under the age of 16 at all times during their shift at the shelter.
- Must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering if under the age of 18.

#### **Physical Requirements:**

- Average strength with the ability to lift up to 15 pounds.
- Must be able to stand and walk around for up to 3 hours while performing essential duties around the shelter, including frequent bending or squatting.
- Possess vision abilities including close vision, distance vision and depth perception.
- Ability to handle cats using the safe and humane techniques recommended by ASAP Cats Cats.
- Must not have strong allergies to cats.
- Severely immune compromised people should consult with their physician prior to volunteering.

#### **Essential Mental Requirements:**

- Ability and willingness to understand, remember, and follow instructions and procedures.
- Ability to read, comprehend, write, and communicate (example: understand words such as quarantine, feral, isolate, or caution).
- Possess general problem solving capability.
- Must be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the cats and people.
- Must be able to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently in these situations, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Ability to understand the role of the volunteer and accept the boundaries between the role of the volunteer and the role of staff.



- A very positive attitude and a solution oriented approach rather than focusing on complaints and negativity.

## **Essential Emotional Requirements:**

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior.
- Ability to interact with the public in a variety of circumstances without projecting your own judgment or assumptions about why people may have to make specific decisions or surrender an animal.
- Ability to set emotional boundaries and personal limits on volunteering time to avoid personal burnout or compassion fatigue.
- Ability to cope with the many emotional issues of an animal shelter including animal cruelty and disregard for animals, dealing with injured and sick animals, and the reality that some of the animals may be ill, unadoptable and may have to be euthanized

## **Opportunities for Advancement:**

- **Adoption Counseling:** Volunteers who demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and understanding of cat behavior may be trained to assist the public in the selection of a pet, provide guidance on care of their new cat, and complete adoption paperwork. Knowledge of ASAP Cats Cats and Animal Services adoption and redemption guidelines and procedures is required.
- **Wellness Team:** Volunteers interested in medical care, who have exhibited sufficient skill in handling cats and have demonstrated a strong work ethic, may qualify to be trained to assist the Wellness Team in administering medications, preparing surgery packs, or maintaining medical records.
- **Feline Behavior Team:** Members of the Behavior Team provide cats with appropriate socialization and training to reduce stress, assist cats in adapting to the shelter environment, and improve adoptability. To be eligible for the Behavior Team, a volunteer must exhibit skill in handling cats and an understanding of ASAP Cats Cats training procedures. A significant amount of experience working in the shelter is required.
- **Outreach and Administrative Assistance:** Assistants aid in maintenance of logs and records, social media activities, correspondence, photocopying and other related tasks as necessary.
- **Adoption Support Team:** Volunteers who demonstrate excellent interpersonal and communication skills, as well as an understanding of cat behavior may be trained to do support outreach to ASAP Cats Cats adopters and other community members seeking assistance
- **Lead Volunteer:** Makes the decisions, guided by ASAP Cats Cats and Animal Services policies and procedures, and supervises volunteers to ensure levels of daily care are maintained. To qualify as a Lead, a volunteer must exhibit skill in handling cats and must be aware of ASAP Cats Cats and Animal Services policies and medical procedures. A significant amount of experience working in the shelter is required.

## **Benefits of Volunteering:**

- Opportunity to work with a group of positive, dynamic individuals who love animals as much as you do.
- Chance to learn more about cat behavior and handling techniques, vaccine protocols or the latest treatment for illness – skills that may prove beneficial to your own pets.
- Experience the reward of knowing you helped save the life of a homeless animal. Our volunteers are elated when a cat finds a new home and leaves the shelter.
- Annual volunteer appreciation event.

**Support Provided:** Training for this position will be provided at the Information Session, Basic Training Class, Feline Behavior Class and during the Shadow Day. In addition, the Volunteer Program Director is available on an ongoing basis to answer questions and provide other assistance as needed.

# ASAP Cats Volunteer Manual

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## **Title: Adoption Counselor**

**Supervisor:** Shift Leaders

**Schedule:** At least 4 hours per week between the hours of 9:00am – 5:00pm and/or during special adoption events

**Term:** At least 6 months

**Summary:** Adoption Counselors assist the public in the selection of a cat, screen potential adopters, provide guidance on recommended cat care, and complete the adoption counseling and paperwork.

### **Essential Duties:**

- Actively reach out to and interacting with the general public, specifically talking with prospective adopters to find out what they are looking for in a cat.
- Interact with and get to know the available cats, including reviewing Cat Chat as well as the Behavior Team notes and following their recommendations.
- Provide high quality customer service to the members of the public who visit ASAP Cats Cats.
- Help people through the adoption process, share information about cat care and behavior, review adoption applications, interview applicants in a conversational way, and communicate with the applicant in a manner that maintains a courteous and friendly attitude, while reinforcing ASAP Cats Cats's established policies and procedures.
- Treat all animals and people humanely, properly, and with compassion at all times, regardless of the situation or circumstance.
- Maintain a friendly demeanor and providing good customer service while assisting with adoptions.
- Work courteously and cooperatively with other volunteers, ASAP Cats Cats staff members, and Animal Services staff.
- Ability to recognize potential problems with adoptions and work towards solutions or, when necessary, deny the adoption.
- Seek assistance and support from more experienced adoption counselors or staff when needed.
- Follow all guidelines, procedures and policies set by ASAP Cats Cats and Animal Services.

### **Qualifications**

- In depth understanding of ASAP Cats Cats and Animal Services policies and procedures with regard to adoptions.
- Ability to understand and appreciate the different needs of individual cats and people in order to make successful matches.
- Ability to understand ASAP Cats Cats's adoption process, basic veterinary information, and emotional and physical requirements of individual cats.
- Appropriate level of maturity, good judgment and a professional personal appearance.
- Ability to treat people and animals with respect, contribute to effective teamwork, and provide good customer service.
- Strong organization skills with attention to detail and thoroughness.
- Demonstrated understanding of ASAP Cats Cats's approach to feline behavior.
- Demonstrated expertise in safe and humane handling of cats according to the ASAP Cats Cats recommended cat handling techniques.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with volunteers, staff and the public.

### **Physical Requirements:**



- Average strength with the ability to lift up to 15 pounds.
- Possess vision abilities including close vision, distance vision and depth perception.
- Must not have strong allergies to cats.
- Severely immune compromised people should consult with their physician prior to volunteering.

**Essential Mental Requirements:**

- Ability to understand, remember and apply ASAP Cats Cats and Animal Services policies and procedures.
- Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
- Maintain accurate records and make reports as necessary.
- Possess strong problem solving capability.
- Exhibit tact and good judgement.
- Must be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the cats and people.
- Must be able to remain calm with animals and/or members of the public who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.

**Essential Emotional Requirements:**

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal or human behavior.
- Ability to interact with the public in a variety of circumstances without projecting your own judgment or assumptions about why people may behave in certain ways.
- Ability to set emotional boundaries and personal limits on volunteering time to avoid personal burnout or compassion fatigue.
- Ability to cope with the many emotional issues of an animal shelter including animal cruelty and disregard for animals, dealing with injured and sick animals, and the reality that some of the animals maybe ill, unadoptable and may have to be euthanized.

# ASAP Cats Volunteer Manual

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## **Title: Lead Volunteer**

**Supervisor:** Volunteer Program Director

**Schedule:** At least 4 hours per week between the hours of 9:00am – 5:00pm

**Term:** 1 year minimum commitment

**Summary:** Lead Volunteers supervise shelter care volunteers in the daily care of cats and shelter cleaning. While on duty, they are the primary interface between ASAP Cats and the public and make decisions, guided by ASAP Cats and Santa Barbara County Animal Services policies and procedures, to ensure that members of the public and cats in our care both receive high levels of customer service.

### **Essential Duties:**

- Actively participate in the daily care of cats and shelter cleaning—model the work ethic that you want your volunteers to follow.
- Manage the workload of the shift appropriately, including actively supervising and delegating specific tasks to volunteers, and ensuring all volunteers are performing their duties in compliance with ASAP Cats policies and procedures.
- Ensure all volunteers are demonstrating safe and humane handling of the cats according to the ASAP Cats recommended cat handling techniques.
- Interface with the public and oversee all volunteer interactions with the public to ensure visitors have a positive shelter experience.
- Provide adoption guidance and counseling to potential adopters. Supervise adoption counselors.
- Troubleshoot problems with members of the public, cats and facilities as necessary. Reach out to management when faced with unusual circumstances or if uncertain of what action should be taken.
- Identify volunteers with leadership potential and/or other valuable skills and make recommendations to the Volunteer Program Director for their mentorship and additional training as appropriate.
- Other duties as assigned.

### **Qualifications:**

- In depth understanding of ASAP Cats and Animal Services policies and procedures.
- Demonstrated expertise in safe and humane handling of cats according to the ASAP Cats recommended cat handling techniques.
- Demonstrated understanding of ASAP Cats's approach to feline behavior.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise tact and good judgement.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with volunteers, staff and the public.
- Demonstrated ability to handle competing priorities and multiple tasks.
- An active email account.

### **Physical Requirements:**

- Average strength with the ability to lift up to 15 pounds.
- Must be able to stand and walk around for up to 3 hours while performing essential duties around the shelter, including frequent bending or squatting.
- Possess vision abilities including close vision, distance vision and depth perception.
- Must not have strong allergies to cats.
- Severely immune compromised people should consult with their physician prior to volunteering.

### **Essential Mental Requirements:**

- Ability to understand, remember and apply ASAP Cats and Animal Services policies and procedures.





- Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
- Maintain accurate records and make reports as necessary.
- Possess strong problem solving capability.
- Exhibit tact and good judgement.
- Must be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the cats and people.
- Must be able to remain calm with animals and/or members of the public who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.

**Essential Emotional Requirements:**

- Ability to motivate volunteers.
- Model a very positive attitude and a solution oriented approach, and discourage volunteers from complaining or focusing on negativity.
- Ability to cope with unexpected animal or human behavior.
- Ability to interact with the public in a variety of circumstances without projecting your own judgment or assumptions about why people may have to make specific decisions or surrender an animal.
- Ability to set emotional boundaries and personal limits on volunteering time to avoid personal burnout or compassion fatigue.
- Ability to cope with the many emotional issues of an animal shelter including animal cruelty and disregard for animals, dealing with injured and sick animals, and the reality that some of the animals maybe ill, unadoptable and may have to be euthanized.