

Trapping Guidelines



Date of Trap Rental: _____ Date Trap Due back: _____

The Humane Society of Charlotte loans out traps for the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) of community cats. Any questions, concerns, or requests for a trap loan extension should be directed to the Spay Neuter Clinic at 704-333-4130 or spayneuter@humanecharlotte.org. To view our TNR surgery calendar visit: <https://humanesocietyofcharlotte.org/health-wellness/trap-neuter-return/>

Preparation for Trapping

To ensure the cats will be hungry, do not feed them 24 hours before trapping. Hungry cats are less apprehensive about entering a trap.

To keep the cat trapped a minimum amount of time, trap the night before or early morning the day of surgery. Cats should not eat after midnight the night before surgery.

Prepare the area you will hold the cats before and after surgery. A garage or other sheltered, temperature-controlled area is best. Lay down newspapers or absorbent material to catch stool, urine and food residue.

Prepare your vehicle as well.

Plan your day of trapping carefully. Remember that you may have one chance to successfully trap an animal. If you trap a cat and release him or her, it is unlikely that you will be able to catch that cat again. They learn very quickly!

If there are young kittens involved, they will not be weaned from their mother until they are four to six weeks of age and will not be ready for surgery until they are eight to ten weeks of age. If trapping a lactating female, try to locate the kittens and see if they are old enough to eat on their own. If they are too young, wait until they can eat on their own to trap the mother. Kittens are only eligible for TNR once they are old enough.

Setting the Traps

Plan to set traps just before or at the cats' normal feeding time. Don't trap in the rain or the heat of day without adequate protection for the cats in the traps. Cats are vulnerable in the traps and could get drenched during storms or suffer from heatstroke in the sun. Place traps where the cats usually feed or are regularly seen. Cats will not enter and unstable trap, so make sure you place the trap on a level surface.



Open the rear door (the one that slides up) and prop it open. You can fold newspaper to line the bottom of the trap and cover the trip plate. Don't use too much paper or fabric towels, as it can interfere with the trap mechanism, prevent the door from closing properly, or get in the way of clinic staff when they are preparing for surgery. Lining is not necessary, but some cats don't like walking on the wire.

To bait the trap, place a small amount of wet cat food, tuna, or other smelly treat near the back of the trap, between the rear door and the trip plate.

After baiting the trap, close the rear door. Open the trap door at the opposite end by grabbing the rings and pulling them up. Then swing the trap door up. Inside the trap, rotate the trigger rod 90 degrees so the trap door rests against it while open. (Photos on next page).

When the cat steps on the plate, it will cause the trigger to release the door and close the trap.



The Waiting Game

As soon as the cat is trapped, cover the trap and remove trapped cat. Keeping the cat covered will help it to stay calm. When you get the captured cat to a quiet area away from the other traps, lift the cover and check for signs that you have the correct animal and not a pet or a previously neutered community cat.

If you know or suspect that there are more cats you failed to catch and you are their normal caretaker, leave food out for them after you have finished trapping since they may not have eaten since the last time you fed them.

If you inadvertently catch a wild animal attracted to the food, or a cat you did not intend to trap (such as one that is ear-tipped and has already been surgically altered), release the animal by lifting the rear door. Stand behind the trap while doing so to give the animal a clear escape route.

Holding Procedure

After you have trapped the cat(s), hold the cat(s) in a safe, enclosed location until you can take them to the clinic. This may mean holding them overnight if you catch in the evening. Keep the cat(s) covered and calm; they will remain quiet as long as they are covered. **Do not stick your fingers in the traps.** These are often unsocialized animals who will scratch and bite. If you are bitten or scratched, contact Animal Care and Control through 311. The cat will be held in quarantine for 10 days unless there is a previous record of vaccinations.

At the Clinic

Bring the trapped cat to the HSC Spay/Neuter Clinic, located at 1348 Parker Dr, Charlotte, NC 28208. Check-in for Community Cats is first-come-first-served at 8:30am. You will pick the cat back up that same day. Cats brought in for TNR surgeries **MUST** be in a trap; each cat must be in a separate trap, up to 2 cats per person per day.

You will be given more detailed instructions regarding post-surgery care by the facility when you retrieve the cat.

Releasing the Cat

Release the cat in the same place that you trapped him. Do not relocate the cat; it can be construed as abandonment and the cat may die. It's common for cats to drive away new cats who appear in their area.

Make sure the release location does not encourage the cat to run toward danger (like a busy street). Always point the trap away from such dangers. Keep the trap covered until you are ready to release the cat. Place the trap on the ground and open the rear door by lifting it straight up while standing behind or to the side of the trap. Do not obstruct the cat's escape route. The cat will probably bolt immediately out of the trap. If that doesn't happen, tilt the trap so the rear door is slightly up and tap on the back of the trap to encourage the cat to leave. **Never put your hand in the trap.**

Return empty traps to the Humane Society of Charlotte by the due date to avoid additional fees.

