



# THE ANTI-CRUELTY SOCIETY

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A Commitment to Caring *Since 1899*

**Volunteer Department**

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**CAT CARE I MANUAL**

## INTRODUCTION

### **Welcome to the Cat Care I Volunteer Program!**

As a volunteer in the Cat Care Program, you will have an opportunity to make the shelter experience better for the cats in our charge while also preparing them for their future homes.

### **Program Objective**

The purpose of this shelter-wide enrichment program is to provide cats with daily enrichment activities to help ensure their ongoing social, emotional, mental, behavioral and physical well-being, resulting in enhanced adoptability.

Enrichment is focused on providing daily care and experiences that help prevent or relieve some of the stress, boredom, frustration and related behavioral deterioration that a cat may experience upon confinement in a shelter environment.

### **Program Levels:**

Many cats become unusually stressed when in a shelter environment which means that it can take less time for them to react than if they were in a home. Consequently, we must insist that you meet a certain level of proficiency at each level before moving on to the next.

### **Cat Care I:**

This level teaches the basics of classical conditioning and reward training. Classical conditioning helps teach cats to associate their kennel and people with positive things. Reward training techniques help us teach more appealing kennel presentation by rewarding appropriate behaviors and not reinforcing inappropriate behaviors. Cat Care I introduces various beneficial enrichment activities that can be prepared and implemented by staff and volunteers in a short amount of time.

Cat Care I training also teaches how to desensitize cats to common items and events that often trigger undesirable behavior. These triggers include people approaching kennels, opening and closing kennel latches and doors, as well as removing cats from their kennels. Through consistency and progressive desensitization, volunteers will help teach cats to display polite behavior when people approach their kennel for any reason. Volunteers will learn more about how to increase polite behavior (and prevent impolite behavior), both in and out of the kennel, through appropriate reinforcement and management.

### **Cat Care II**

Cat Care II training is offered to volunteers who have demonstrated proficiency in the Cat Care I program and have completed 25 hours in the Cat Care I program.

In Cat Care II volunteers will work with special needs cats who need additional one-on-one intervention to address behavioral issues. Volunteers will also learn how to effectively apply the concepts of progressive desensitization and classical conditioning to various situations.

### **Cat Care III**

In this highly specialized program volunteers work with designated cats in the Cat Holding areas with Animal Behavior & Training supervision. Focusing on cats needing additional socialization, as well as those who are not eating, Cat Care III volunteers help cats adjust to stressful shelter surroundings.

**Cross-Training:** Volunteers who have completed 25 hours or more within their current volunteer program are welcome to cross-train into any new area. If you are interested in cross-training into Dog Adopts, Cat Care, Clinic Patient Care or another Level 1 or Level 2 volunteer program please contact the Volunteer Services department for details and scheduling.

**Cat Care I Responsibilities:**

- 1) Tend to basic physiological needs
- 2) Relieve stress and boredom
- 3) Teach cats proper etiquette
- 4) Record activities

Please note that it is the responsibility of staff and Cat Adopts volunteers to work directly with the public. If you are volunteering during our adoption hours and are approached by a visitor, please introduce them to the appropriate person for assistance. Cat Care I volunteers are not trained in adoption procedures and should defer to staff and volunteers who are well-versed in this topic.

**Cat Care Training Requirements**

Our volunteer training curriculum has been designed to provide incoming helpers with the knowledge and skills you'll need to make the most of your experience.

Volunteers receive a Volunteer Training Tracker to help guide you through each of the steps below. A sample of the sheet can be found in the appendix. Volunteers need to bring this sheet with them to each step. Once training is completed, please turn the Volunteer Training Tracker in to the Volunteer services department so we can activate your volunteer profile, issue your ID badge and welcome kit.

**1) Virtual Volunteer Orientation:** Volunteers are asked to watch our Virtual Volunteer Orientation and take a quiz to test your knowledge of the Society's services, programs, and philosophies.

**2) Animal Handling Training:** Once you successfully completed your Virtual Volunteer Orientation you received an invite to attend Animal Handling Training. This lecture-based training prepared you with knowledge about basic animal body language, handling philosophies, safety, and more. Be sure to bring a copy of your Training Tracker (see Volunteer Handbook) to each step of your training.

**3) Program Training:** At your training session you'll learn everything you need to fulfill your goals within your program. Prior to attending your training you should have reviewed this manual, re-read the Volunteer Handbook, and watched the following videos:

- Required Video: [Body Language & Behavior - Cats](#)
- Optional Videos:
  - [Cat Enrichment](#)
  - [Zoonotic Diseases](#)
  - [Ectoparasites](#)
  - [Safety Training](#)

At the end of the session you will be asked to schedule your final step in training, your solo session. Volunteers are required to complete their solo session within a month of attending Program Training.

**4) Solo Session:** Your volunteer solo session is an opportunity for you to come in on your own to give your program a test run. Utilizing the program checklist at the end of this manual, you'll come in on your own without a trainer to work in your program for the first time. At the end of your session you will need to turn in your Training Tracker to the Volunteer Services department. Once your tracker is received, you will receive a voucher to obtain your Volunteer Welcome Kit, which includes your apron, program button, volunteer t-shirt, and program supplies, from the front desk. The Volunteer Services department will also activate your volunteer profile and add you to the newsletter list.

### **Foundations of Enrichment: Minimum Standards of Care**

It is a daily priority to meet and exceed certain minimum standards of care and well-being for the animals in our care. These standards serve as the foundations of a successful enrichment program. The following "Minimum Standards of Care" are the framework for our programs.

#### **We have an obligation to ensure that cats have a clean living space.**

If a kennel is soiled it should be cleaned by staff as soon as possible.

#### **We have an obligation to ensure that cats have clean, fresh water at all times.**

Frequently monitor and refill water bowls.

#### **We have an obligation to provide a comfortable, dry bed for every cat.**

If bedding is wet or soiled, replace it.

#### **We have an obligation to provide appropriate toys at all times.**

#### **We have an obligation to ensure that cats engage daily in positive interactions with people.**

#### **We have an obligation to ensure that cats receive appropriate health and medical care.**

Cats should receive routine healthcare and prompt attention for any illness or physical condition that arises while in our care. Follow existing protocol to alert staff immediately about any concern or condition that may require medical attention.

It will require ongoing effort and cooperation from all staff and volunteers in order to meet these obligations. When these standards are consistently maintained, the positive effects will be felt throughout the shelter.

## **CAT CARE VOLUNTEER POLICIES**

### **Importance of Following Procedure and Policy**

As a volunteer it is important to follow all procedures and policies. These have been compiled from the knowledge and experiences of other Anti-Cruelty Society volunteers and staff. They have been created in an effort to protect the animals and people who interact with them. Adhering to these procedures will assist you with your volunteer responsibilities.

If at any time you have any questions, issues or concerns, please bring them to the attention of the Volunteer Services Department. Failure to follow volunteer guidelines may result in immediate dismissal from your program.

**Safety Guidelines**

For your safety, the safety of other cats and visitors, please do not perform care duties you have not received instruction for via an Anti-Cruelty Society staff member. Never stick your whole arm or hand through the kennel. Remember to follow all other volunteer guidelines (such as dress code) for safety when interacting with the animals.

If you have cats of your own at home, be sure that they are current on all of their vaccinations before you begin to volunteer with our feline population. Illnesses such as Distemper are rare in our shelter environment, but when they do appear, can be lethal to kittens and unvaccinated cats. To protect your own pets, they should be up-to-date on their vaccines.

**Reading Animal Information:** All volunteers who work hands-on with animals are required to review any and all kennel notes prior to making physical contact with the pet. Whether a temporary sign, kennel card or behavior report, it is vital for volunteers to learn as much as possible about each animal before handling them directly. Failure to review this information may result in injury to the volunteer, animal, staff or a visitor. Volunteers who repeatedly fail to review an animal's information prior to handling may be dismissed from their volunteer program.

**Bites and Scratches:** If at any time you or a visitor is bitten or scratched it must be reported immediately to a manager on duty. Animals who bite and draw blood must undergo a 10 day rabies quarantine on-site per the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Animals who bite are typically reassessed after the rabies quarantine to ensure their continued adoptability.

**Hygiene:** Practicing good hygiene not only prevents the transmission of illness between animals, it also keeps the human handlers safe. Please follow these guidelines to ensure good hygiene:

- Wash your hands before and after each animal encounter.
- In addition to hand-washing, utilize hand sanitizer when it is available.
- Hand-washing is also required if you come into contact with a fomite (i.e. any object that may potentially be carrying a germ), feces, blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, exudates or articles contaminated by these substances.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking; after using the restroom; after cleaning animal cages or animal-care areas; and whenever hands are visibly soiled.
- Staff will properly disinfect toys and brushes, but volunteers are responsible for placing them in the sink in the Cat Adopts kitchen directly after use. Do not allow cats to share toys that have been used by other cats and not disinfected.

**Animal Sickness:** To ensure the safety and protection of all animals in the shelter requires continual observation of their health and temperament. If an animal shows any sign of illness (such as sneezing, vomiting, discharge from the nose or eyes, runny or bloody stool or urine, or unusual behavior), it is important to notify a shelter staff member.

**Our Training Philosophy**

The Anti-Cruelty Society believes that cats and dogs can be easily trained to do basic behaviors without the use of force or domination. Positive reinforcement is the best tool for building a foundation of mutual trust, respect, and an understanding that will remain throughout each pet's life. A heavy hand is never

necessary in having a well-trained pet. To read more about positive reinforcement and why this training philosophy has been proven most effective when training animals, visit the [Volunteer Resources](#) page of our website. Volunteers who employ a training philosophy at odds with positive reinforcement may be asked to resign from their volunteer program.

### **An Open Door for Animals**

The Anti-Cruelty Society is an open-admission (or “open door”) humane society. We will never turn an animal away that comes to us – no matter what their condition, age, breed or species. Many of these animals are healthy, good natured pets who go up for adoption. There are, however, animals that come to our shelter sick, severely injured, too aggressive or behaviorally unsound to be placed for adoption. Sometimes these animals can be rehabilitated, but sometimes they cannot. In this case, euthanasia is the most humane alternative. As with limited-admission shelters, we do not euthanize animals for space or time limits. Limited admission, or “no-kill” shelters, select which animals they will accept and reject the rest. The Anti-Cruelty Society believes that no animal in need should ever be turned away. For this reason the Society has made an informed decision not to associate itself with the term “no-kill” as it can be deceiving and cause confusion.

**Emotional Considerations:** Working with animals can become emotionally exhausting at times. Whether seeing a pet sit in their cage for an elongated stay, or parting with an animal upon their adoption, there are many emotional considerations to keep in mind when volunteering in an animal shelter.

Whether you feel overwhelmed by an animal’s adoption return, or a recent relinquishment, it’s important to focus on the positives and what you can personally do to make an impact in each animal’s life. Whether they are here for a short period of time, are transferred out to one of our partners, or euthanized, you have a unique opportunity to care for that pet during your volunteer visit.

If you should ever find yourself struggling to cope with the emotional aspects of volunteering, please contact our Volunteer Department for additional resources and assistance.

**Euthanasia:** The majority of the euthanasia performed occurs to animals undergoing tests and evaluations by the clinic and staff, prior to placement in the adoption rooms.

Sometimes cats and dogs who have been placed in the Adoption room undergo reevaluation for health and temperament, and may be deemed unadoptable. In these circumstances The Anti-Cruelty Society exhausts the following options when appropriate before euthanizing an animal:

- Medical treatment and placement in our rehabilitation suite.
- Relocation to foster home for the treatment of an illness and/or socialization.
- Placement with a rescue organization if available

If these options are not feasible, the shelter may decide to euthanize the animal in question. With this in mind, please note that there is no time limit on any animal that is up for adoption and that as long as they remain healthy and psychologically sound, they will remain in the Adoption Room until an appropriate placement is made.

Please show consideration to the shelter staff who are directly involved with the making of these difficult decisions. If you should ever have a question regarding our Euthanasia Policy, or a specific decision that was made, please speak with a Shelter Manager or contact the Volunteer Services Department.

### Scheduling & Logging Hours

All volunteer in Level 1 programs are required to pre-schedule their volunteer shifts as well as log their completed hours on their [individual volunteer profiles](#). Volunteers who repeatedly avoid pre-scheduling or forget to log their hours may be dismissed from continuing on in their program.

## GETTING STARTED

### When You Can Volunteer

- The Anti-Cruelty Society is open to the public 7 days a week for adoptions:
  - Monday-Friday: 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Last adoption application at 6:30pm
  - Saturday & Sunday: 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm. Last adoption application at 4:30pm
- The Anti-Cruelty Society is open to the public for the receiving of animals seven days a week from 9:00 am - 7:00 pm.
- Cat Care volunteers may work in the shelter 7 days a week between 8:00 am - 12:00 pm., weekdays from 6:30 – 7:45 pm as well as on weekends between 4:30 pm – 7:40 pm.

**Holidays:** There are no adoptions on major holidays, but volunteers are encouraged to work with the animals on days where we are closed to the public.

### Where You Can Volunteer

Cat Care volunteers will spend the majority of their time working with cats within the Adoption Room and Charlotte's Cat Corner.

### When You Arrive

Upon arrival volunteers should sign in at the front desk. This allows staff to know, at a glance, who has arrived for their shift.

After signing in head to the Volunteer Office to store your personal belongings in one of the provided lockers. You will need to bring your own lock. Collect whatever supplies you may need, included treats, clickers and an apron. If it is your first visit also grab your volunteer ID badge off the bulletin board. Following your shift you should take it home with you.

**Before Concluding Your Shift:** Notify staff and other volunteers in Cat Adopts that you are leaving. This way personnel knows how many people are currently in the room and that you are no longer available to assist them with the cats. Then head back to the volunteer office and place your soiled apron in the hamper so that staff can have it washed and disinfected. Please make sure apron pockets have been emptied. Log your hours in your Volunteer Profile using the provided computer. Gather up your belongings and remove your lock from the locker.

### Working Alongside Anti-Cruelty Society Staff and Other Volunteers

Anti-Cruelty Society staff members are in the room to tend to the cats and during adoption hours to assist the public. Please ask a staff member for assistance with handling a cat, answering a question, or other needs you may have.

Here is a glimpse of the typical Cat Adopts room schedule:

**Daily:**

8am-8:30am: Staff feeds cats breakfast

9am-12pm: Cat Care volunteers socialize and train cats; Staff perform morning cleaning

12pm: Adoption Center opens to visitors

1:30pm-2pm: Staff feed cats dinner

4pm- 7:30pm: Staff spot cleans cats (actual start time varies, usually takes about 1 hour)

**Monday-Friday:**

6:30pm: Staff takes final adoption application

7:30pm: Managers perform final checks

7:45pm: Building shuts down to staff and volunteers

**Saturday-Sunday:**

4:30pm: Staff takes final adoption application

7:30pm: Managers perform final checks

7:45pm: Building shuts down to staff and volunteers

**Volunteer Mentors:** Experienced volunteers wear a yellow badge signifying that they are volunteer mentors. These volunteers are here to answer questions or assist new volunteers. You can check a mentor's schedule on the Volunteer Scheduler on the Anti-Cruelty website. Volunteer Mentors also check-in as available on the "Sign-In" sheet at the front desk during their shifts. Feel free to reach out these experienced volunteers should you need assistance.

## CAT CARE I RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1) Tend to basic physiological needs.

**Grooming:** Cats who have been earmarked for grooming by volunteers and staff will have a picture card slipped into their kennel card holder. An example of this card can be found at the end of this manual. Cats can be groomed in or outside of the kennel. Please note the temperament of each cat *before* beginning a grooming session.

**Social Eaters:** Some of the cats who are in Cat Adopts may have waning appetites. These are cats who are stressed and do not eat when alone. To identify a social eater, look into kennels to see who has not touched their food. Then, follow the classical conditioning steps as outlined below to socialize these cats in-cage to encourage them to eat.

If there is a cat whose meal you would like to supplement - please ask for clearance from an attending staff member before giving additional wet food. We monitor eating very closely and by circumventing the process without pre-approval you may be actually harming the cat unintentionally. If in doubt - ask a manager.



**Spot Checks:** Check to see that each cat in the adoption room has each of the following:

- Fresh Water
  - When refilling water bowls be careful not to touch the kennel bars with the can tip.
  - Filling the dish too high may cause water to spill, so only fill it up half-way.
- Bedding
  - Each cat should have a brightly colored fleece bed. These blankets are handmade by Busy Fingers volunteers. Extra blankets can be found in the Cat Adopts kitchen or in the laundry room
- A plastic riser or shoe box
  - Each cat should have a place to perch and/or hide.
  - If there are no risers available in the Cat Adopts kitchen, ask a staff member of their current storage location.
- Toys
  - Each cat should have at least one toy in their kennel to provide mental stimulation.
- Cardboard Scratcher

If a cat is missing one or more of the above items, and you are unsure of where to find something, ask a staff member.

**Prepping Kennels:** Note that volunteers should not be prepping empty cages for cat transfers as this is a procedure that is delegated to staff only. If a staff member asks you to prep a cage, politely decline and explain that this is not a procedure you have been trained to complete.

## 2) Relieve stress and boredom

The activities described below are designed to engage all five of the cats' senses as well as provide novel experiences to alleviate boredom. You may also choose and implement an activity out of the Enrichment Menu, found at the end of this manual for each cat. Supplies for these various activities are located in the Cat Adopts kitchen, Volunteer Office and in the donation nook outside of Clean & Preen. Please inform AB&I staff or Volunteer Services if any supplies are running low and feel free to ask if you have any questions.

**Paper ball:** Get a stack of scratch paper from Customer Service, crumple the paper, and give to the cats.

**Rattle:** Give each cat a "rattle" – a small plastic capsule with a dried bean inside; remove and replace to bin for disinfection after a couple of hours.

**Plastic egg with food:** This should be done as close to noon as possible so that it does not interfere with normal meal time; smear about half a teaspoon of canned food inside a half of a plastic Easter egg; remove after half an hour and clean.

**Scent:** Draw a few drops of cinnamon extract across the paper in the cage; make a wiggly line that is a bit longer for cats who are more confident; shy cats can receive a few drops near where they are resting/hiding.

**Treats:** Give two or three treats; shy cats should be given treats near where they are lying; more outgoing or busy cats should have the treats spread around the cage (on the shelf, under the corner of the bedding, in opposite corners, etc.).

**Zoom Groom:** Brush each cat for about 30 seconds with the Zoom Groom; this brush has massaging properties so can be soothing to cats, more so than regular grooming; watch for signs of discomfort or over-stimulation (twitching tail or muscles, sudden head orientation toward the brush, etc.) and stop when they occur.

**Toys:** Grab a wand, or some other kind of interactive toy, and give a kitty a one-on-one play session either inside or outside of their kennel.

### **3) Teach cats proper etiquette to attract adopters.**

**Treat runs:** Classically conditioning cats to accept, if not enjoy, the approach of people by walking through the room and tossing a treat into every cage. Do not pressure the cat to come forward or solicit any specific behavior. Treat runs should be quick, quiet and should place no pressure on a cat.

**Petting Crawls:** Classically conditioning cats to accept, if not enjoy, petting by briefly petting each cat in the room. This will help cats to be less defensive as they learn that not all petting by personnel will lead to removal from the cage or other undesired interactions. This will also maintain friendly behaviors in cats who are not wary of handling.

Start on one end of the room and slowly approach a kennel, popping in a couple of treats, and gently opening the kennel door. Then, speak softly to the cat, encouraging them to come forward by offering additional treats and light petting. Watch the cat closely for any signs of arousal or stress and stop working immediately if they spit, growl, or swat. Give over-aroused cats at least an hour to settle before attempting work again, and work more slowly. If cat allows continued petting, offer another treat and stroke them gently for another few minutes. Then quietly withdraw, close kennel, disinfect your hands and move onto the next cat.

**Graceful Kennel Exits:** Classically condition cats to exit their kennel calmly and politely by rewarding good behavior. Quietly approach the kennel and open door, soliciting the cat to come forward. If cat shows desirable behaviors, such as approaching, making calm eye contact, sniffing hand or solicit affection, offer pets and praise. Gently remove cat from the kennel and walk to bench or windowsill for five minutes of quiet time. Afterwards, place cat back in kennel and offer treats for good behavior.

### **4) Record Activities**

Volunteers are asked to note each interaction with each cat on the Cat Socialization Tracker located in the Cat Adopts kitchen. A list of cats in the room is printed each morning and placed on a clipboard. Volunteers should be checking to see which cats in the room have not yet been socialized, and then marking socialization between cats. This ensures that each cat in the room is receiving quality socialization several times a day. Socialization can include time outside or inside the kennel.

Cat Care I volunteers are also encouraged to note activities and behavior observations in the Enrichment Log found in a binder near the windowsill.

## Cat Profiles & Handling

### Before Handling a Cat

Prior to engaging with any cat, volunteers will need to learn more about the animal so as to best set yourself and the cat up for success. **Volunteers are required to review each of the following items before removing a cat from their kennel.** Failure to do so may result in a volunteer's removal from the Dog Adopts program.

**Read their Kennel Card:** The kennel card is the most important document for each cat as it contains all health, temperament, and behavior information for the animal. Note the cat's name, gender, age and other helpful information that is provided prior to taking them out for a visitor or for socialization.

Volunteers should not write on the kennel cards. If at any point you do not understand, cannot read, or have forgotten what a notation or symbol means – ask a shelter staff member.

**Review Behavior Notes:** In addition to their kennel card, some cats may have a more extended behavior report available. Volunteers are required to read these reports **before** removing them from their kennel. These screenings are performed by a shelter Animal Behavior and Intake staff member in an attempt to provide handlers with more information regarding each cat's personality and temperament. Reading the report will set both you and the cat up for success.

**Review Additional Kennel Signage:** In addition to the kennel card and behavior reports, volunteers should remain aware of additional notes in the kennel card holder. Do not remove a cat from the kennel if any of the following signs are present:

- **“Waiting for Test Results”** - which means the cat cannot be removed from the cage, shown or adopted until the results of the heartworm test are recorded by the clinic.
- **“Adoption Pending”** – A person is in the midst of the adoption process and is awaiting approval
- **“I’m Adopted”** – This cat is going home with someone and the adoption has been approved
- **“I am not available for adoption at this time”** – various health or behavioral issues may be the reason for this sign, or the cat may be sent to a breed rescue organization.
- **“Hold for BSR”**- This cat will be specifically held for the behavior department so that a behavior assessment could be performed.

### Basic Handling Policies

It is the responsibility of each individual cat handler to positively reward and reinforce desired behaviors and to actively manage the cat and his environment in a way that prevents undesirable behavior.

**Focus Your Attention:** Volunteers should remain attentive to the cat with which they are interacting. Watch for signs of agitation, even if they seem subtle or something to dismiss. Cats will always signal you if they are uncomfortable or done with socializing. Forcing a cat to interact beyond their threshold can result in injury to the handler.

Your visual and physical focus should be directed toward the cat at all times. It is the responsibility of each cat's handler to positively reward and reinforce desired behaviors and to actively manage the cat and his environment in a way that prevents undesirable behavior.

**Keep Cats Safe:** Cats from separate kennels should not have physical contact with one another at any time. This is to prevent the spread of germs and a potential fight. Cats should also be kept off the floor to keep them from contracting an illness or becoming loose. Once a cat is out of their kennel they should be placed on a bench with a visitor or volunteer. They should not be held and paraded around the room as this may cause anxiety for other cats in the space.

**Removing Cats from their kennels:** Volunteer should follow the guidelines below when removing a cat from their kennel.

- **Approach** the kennel talking to the cat in a calm and friendly voice.
- **Wait** for the cat to show the tiniest sign of desirable behavior, then immediately reward them by opening the cage and putting in treats.
  - Desirable behaviors include approaching, making calm eye contact, rubbing against the cage door, sniffing at the hand, or soliciting affection or attention.
- **Watch** the cat closely for any signs of arousal or stress and stop working immediately if they spit, growl, or swat.
  - If the cat is displaying a friendly, calm demeanor, move onto the next step.
  - Give over-aroused cats at least an hour to settle before attempting to remove them again. If an adopter is interested in only that particular cat, call upon a staff member for assistance.
- **Lift** the cat out of the cage, supporting the cat's body, keeping the cat's head away from your face.
- **Sit down** in designated space with the cat.
  - Volunteers should not walk around the room holding the cat.

Please do not forcefully remove a cat from their kennel if they are not ready to come out. Forcing a cat in this situation will only make them more fearful and more difficult for personnel to handle in the long-term. If a cat does not want to come out perform socialization exercises with them in-kennel, watching closely for body language that may show they are growing agitated.

**Working with Shy Cats:** There is bound to be a time when a cat is not yet comfortable leaving their cage. In this case, there are several things that you can do to make the cat more comfortable.

First, turn sideways and stand or crouch by the cage. Being sideways ensures you will not end up leaning into the cage which could overwhelm the cat. You may extend your hand toward the cat, but should stop two or three inches away. This is an invitation to the cat and will let you know if the cat is interested in meeting you.

If the cat leans forward to sniff and doesn't move away, it is likely fine for you to gently pet the top of the cat's head, scratch its chin or softly rub its cheek. If the cat enjoys this, you can pull your hand back a few inches to attempt to lure the cat forward for more attention. If the cat comes forward or becomes more active in the cage, you should spend another minute petting and talking to the cat. You may then attempt to remove the cat for a visit on a bench. If the cat isn't prepared for this, you may continue to pet the cat while they are in their cage.

If the cat retreats, you shouldn't reach farther back to pet the cat, but wiggle your fingers and encourage the cat to return to the front of the cage for more attention. Also, watch for signs that indicate the cat is becoming over-stimulated and stop petting if need be.

If the cat does not accept the invitation for attention, entice the cat to play using a straw, pipe cleaner or pencil (move it slowly back and forth on or under the paper or blanket a few inches away from the cat; if the cat watches it but doesn't paw at it, move the item up the wall of the cage or across the top of the cat's hiding box if it is under one). You may use a wand toy to use, but begin with the stick end and not the toy end. Again, if the cat seems to be interested but isn't playing, offer the toy end (a Cat Charmer is often the most successful toy) but move it above and do not flick or throw the toy at the cat.

Treats may also be used to encourage the cat to come forward for attention. If possible, break the treat into two or three pieces. Offer a piece to the cat. If they eat it, offer another piece and then create a trail of treats from the cat toward the front of the cage. After the cat eats a few treats, you may again extend an invitation for petting.

Remember - do not remove (or succumb to pressure from staff or volunteers to remove) a shy cat that is not ready to come out of their cage.

**Difficulty Returning a Cat to their Kennel:** At times volunteers may encounter a cat who does not want to return to their kennel with ease. In such cases, volunteers are encouraged to try the tips below:

- Lure the cat into the kennel using a treat. Place several treats in your hand, allowing the cat to sniff, but not eat the treats. Once at the kennel toss the treats toward the back corner, allowing the cat to follow them into the cage.
- Sometimes a cat may become nervous returning to their kennel due to the sight of other cats. Attempt to limit their view of the other felines by using your body to block their sight line.
- When all else fails ask for a staff member for assistance.

**Recent Spay/Neuter Patients:** Volunteers should be aware of cats who have been recently spayed or neutered. Remain vigilant for signs of infection at the incision sites. If the area looks swollen, red or you observe a discharge, please let a staff member know immediately. Volunteers should also limit the amount of handling for cats who have recently undergone the procedure.

**Managing Inappropriate Behavior:** Any incident of undesirable behavior (such as over-arousal, scratching, mouthiness) should be *immediately*, yet calmly, interrupted and redirected to a desired behavior. For example, you can offer a toy to cat who is play biting.

If at any time a cat's behavior prevents you from handling him safely and in a behaviorally beneficial way, please return the cat to their kennel right away or ask someone for assistance if needed. We do not want cats to have an opportunity to practice unsuitable behavior that is beyond our ability to handle or control. Any behaviors of concern, or significant positive/negative changes, should quickly be brought to the attention of a shelter lead or Animal Behavior & Intake.

## Grooming Cats

As you work in the Cat Adopts room you may notice some cats who have Clean & Preen request cards slipped into their kennels. These are cats that should be prioritized for grooming. You may also notice a cat without a card who is in desperate need of a bath. In this case be sure to check that the animal has not undergone a spay or neuter surgery within the past 10 days before proceeding.

### **Brushing a Cat**

When brushing or combing most cats you should move your tool in the same direction as the hair growth. When the cat has long hair they need to be “back brushed.” To do this, brush with the hair, then against the hair, and then back with the hair. This way you can brush out mats and make sure they don’t have tangles. Always remove the hair from the tools you’ve used and place them in the sink in the Cat Adopts kitchen so staff can properly sanitize them, which will prevent the spread of germs.

### **Nail Trimming**

Volunteers should make it daily practice to touch and handle cats’ paws. This will desensitize them to being touched – making nail trimmings much easier for volunteers, staff, and future adopters.

Please use your best judgment when considering whether or not to trim a cat’s nails. Many cats find this to be an invasive process – so it’s important to only clip claws as needed and for cats whose temperaments will allow it. Only trim nails when it is quiet and calm in the adoption room as cats can become easily stressed during times of high activity, making it difficult to trim. Many cats become aggravated when receiving a 'mani/pedi' which can result in them being less receptive to meet and greets with adopters.

If you do not feel comfortable trimming a particular cat’s nails, but see that it is needed, notify another volunteer or staff member for assistance. Details on how to properly trim a cat’s nails can be found in the appendix of this manual.

## CONCLUSION

On behalf of the staff and animals of The Anti-Cruelty Society we would like to thank you for taking the time to train in the Cat Care Program.

As a Cat Care Volunteer you will be assisting staff and other volunteers in making each cat's shelter experience more pleasant while shortening their length of stay. With your help each cat will have their physical, mental, and emotional needs met on a daily basis. You will also be reinforcing each cat's practice of positive behaviors which will not only help them get adopted faster – but will also lead to a better quality of life for themselves and their adoptive family.

If at any time you have any questions about the Cat Care Program, or anything else regarding your volunteer experience, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Services Department.

Thank you again and we hope you enjoy your time working with The Anti-Cruelty Society!



**APPENDIX**

**Key Contacts**



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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Are the animals at The Anti-Cruelty Society healthy?**

- All animals are examined by a veterinarian at the shelter and are tested before being admitted into an adoption room.
- Volunteers should be aware, however, that there are incubation periods for certain diseases (such as Upper Respiratory Infection and Kennel Cough) so it is possible that an animal may have caught something and is not yet showing signs.
- If an animal is adopted and begins showing signs of illness within 15 days, the owner can contact our Clinic to make a post-adoption appointment.
- Anti-Cruelty recommends that adopters take their new companions to their own veterinarians for a full examination as soon as possible after adoption to establish a new relationship.

#### **Have the animals had their shots?**

- When animals come into the shelter, they are treated as if they have never been vaccinated before and are given the initial vaccinations for rabies and distemper.
- After an animal is adopted, the new owner will need to take them to their own vet to get one or more rounds of booster shots.
- After these initial booster shots the owner will be responsible for keeping the animal up-to-date on its vaccinations. This involves having them vaccinated once a year.

#### **Do the animals have worms?**

- All animals are given de-worming medicine when they arrive at the shelter. This medicine kills most common types of intestinal parasites but, when the new owner takes their animal to their own veterinarian for a full examination, the vet should check to make sure the cat does not have additional parasites.

#### **How long do the cats and kittens stay in the Adoption Room before they are euthanized?**

- There is no “time limit” for animals in the Adoption Rooms. Once they are placed in this room, they stay here until they are adopted, unless they get sick or their temperament changes.

**Cat Care Daily Checklist**

- Introduce yourself as a cat care volunteer to personnel in the Cat Adopts room.
- Do a kibble or toy run around the room.

**Check to see that each cat has the following:**

- Fresh Water
- Bedding
- A shoe box or plastic riser
- Toys
- Cardboard scratcher

**Identify cats who need help with the following:**

- Eating
- Grooming
- Nail Trimming
- Socialization

**After addressing the needs above, choose a cat for a 15 minute socialization session:**

- Choose an activity from the Enrichment Menu
  - Collect supplies needed for activity
  - Practice Classical Conditioning In Kennel with your chosen cat
  - Practice Reward Training with your chosen cat
  - Implement the chosen activity.
  - Conclude socialization session
- 
- Disinfect used services and choose another cat and follow the same steps as above

**Before concluding volunteer activities perform the following:**

- Place used tools in the Cat Adopts kitchen sink for staff to disinfect
- Notify personnel that you are concluding your volunteering
- Log your volunteer hours on a Volunteer Office computer

### Cat Enrichment Menu

The following activities have been designed and compiled to provide added enrichment to a shelter cat's stay. Variety is the spice of life – so do not perform the same activities each time. In addition, limit each activity between 5 and 10 minutes.

#### Pre-Dinner

**Spa Session:** Earmark cats who may need a grooming session and gather the appropriate tools. Slowly approach the cat in the kennel, petting it softly before introducing the brush. Touch the brush to the cats back, while petting, and observe the reaction. If the cat allows, gently brush their fur. Stay alert and watch for any changes in body language. Be sure to disinfect the brush after use.

**Dinner Ware:** Some cats may have sensitive whiskers which rub up against paper bowl walls while eating – discouraging them from finishing a meal. Tear the corners and fold the sides of some bowls down to help kitties with sensitive whiskers eat.

#### Appetizers

**Fish Sticks:** Dab a small amount of food onto the end of a straw or Popsicle stick and place it through the front of the kennel, luring the cat. This will help to encourage cats to come to the front of the cage.

#### Main Course

**Dinner Party:** Walk around the room and check to see which of the cats have not eaten. To help social eaters, slowly open the kennel door and talk to them softly. Next, begin to gently pet them, slowly moving the food bowl in their direction. Try re-mixing the food to reactivate the scent. Never force feed a cat – only coax them into voluntary consumption.

**Wand Flambé:** Grab a wand toy to have a playtime session with cats who play rough. Slowly insert the wand and allow each cat to sniff. Then begin to wave the wand back and forth to engage with the kitty. Do not use the wand again until it has been properly sanitized.

#### Dessert

**Milk & Cookies** Grab a handful of milk rings and treats for a quick playtime and snack session. Lure the kitty to the front of the cage by offering them a treat, praising them softly when they accept. Then, introduce them to the milk tab toy, sliding it back and forth between you and the kitty, until the cat engages on their own. Milk rings can be left in the kennel.

**Wine Tasting:** Grab a wine cork for a game of in-kennel soccer with a cat. Insert the cork into the kennel, moving other toys or dishes over to the side, and roll the cork back and forth between the cat. Watch the kitty's reaction – if they are getting over-stimulated, remove yourself from the equation and let them play alone. Corks can be left in the kennel.

**Vanilla Milkshake:** Grab some straws and move them around the interior walls of a cat's kennel. The sight and sound will encourage them to grab at the straw and not your fingers. Straws can be left in the cat's kennel after your play session.



## CAT NAIL TRIMMING

Nail trimming is an important part of your cat's grooming routine. Many cat owners are reluctant to trim their cat's nails because they are afraid of hurting the cat. While it can be intimidating at first, once you learn how to do it, clipping your cat's nails is almost as easy as clipping your own. For best results use a pair of clippers made specifically for cats or a small-sized (human) fingernail clipper.

### The Quick

The pink part of a cat's nails is called the quick. The quick is where the nerves and blood vessels are located. Snip only the white part of the cat's nail. It's better to be cautious and cut less of the nail than risk cutting the quick. If you accidentally cut the quick, the bleeding that occurs can be stopped by using styptic powder or a styptic stick. It's a good idea to have one of these nearby, and they can be purchased at most drugstores.

### A Slow Introduction

Make sure your cat is comfortable with the clippers before you start. Ideally you should introduce your cat to nail clipping when he or she is a kitten, but if that's not possible, you should slowly introduce your cat to the routine. Choose a quiet place to start the introduction. Try to approach your cat when he or she is relaxed or even groggy after a nap.

Gently take one of your cat's paws between your fingers and massage for no longer than a count of three. If your cat pulls away, don't squeeze or pinch; just follow the signal and keep gentle contact with his or her paw. After your cat is still again, repeat the gesture and softly press on your cat's pad to extend the nail. Release the paw and give your cat a treat. Repeat this exercise several times before you actually clip your cat's nails.

### Trimming Schedule

How do you know when your cat's nails are too long? Their nails will start to snag on carpet, furniture, or your clothing, and you may hear them softly clicking as they walk on hard surfaces. Although scratching posts help, you will still need to trim them every two to three weeks.

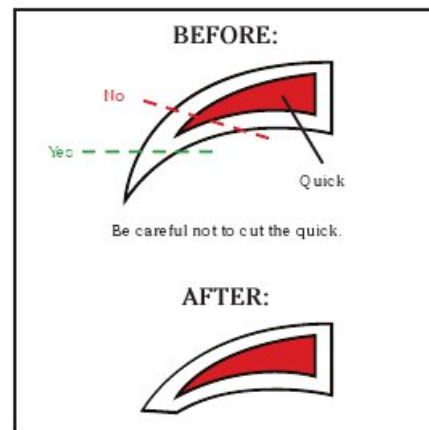
### Clipping Instructions

Follow the simple steps below to be successful with your cat's nail trimming. You may want to do just one paw at a time for the first couple of sessions.

1. With your cat in your lap facing away from you (if this an uncomfortable position, lay the cat on his or her stomach or side), take one of his or her paws in your hand.
2. Press gently on the top of the paw near the base of the nail, while putting pressure on the toe pad. This will extend the nail. Check to see how much of a trim the nails need and notice where the quick begins.
3. With the claw extended, carefully clip off the sharp tip of one nail.
4. If your cat didn't notice and is still comfortable, clip another nail. Follow the same procedure with each claw, being careful not to forget the dewclaws on the side of the cats front paws.
5. When finished, be sure to praise the cat and reward him or her with a special treat.

If your cat refuses to let you clip his or her claws, ask your veterinarian or a groomer for help.

For more information about cats, visit [www.anticruelty.org](http://www.anticruelty.org).



#### Our Mission

Building a community of caring by helping pets and educating people.

#### Website

[www.anticruelty.org](http://www.anticruelty.org)

#### Adoption Center/Animal Shelter

510 North LaSalle Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60654

#### Adoption Hours

M-F Noon-7 p.m.  
Sat. & Sun. Noon-5 p.m.

#### Receiving Hours

9 a.m.-7 p.m., 365 days a year

#### Mailing Address

157 West Grand Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60654

Phone (312) 644-3383

Fax (312) 644-3373

#### Behavior Hotline

(312) 644-3383, ext. 315 or ext. 343

The Anti-Cruelty Society. "Cat Nail Trimming" (APCHT-211)

To download this document or for additional documents, visit [www.anticruelty.org/resources](http://www.anticruelty.org/resources).