

Feral Cat Housing and Handling Protocol

For the safety of personnel and cats, the following protocols are to be used by all departments housing or caring for feral cats, semi-feral cats, or cats suspected of being feral.

HOUSING

Every feral cat must have a Feral Cat Den inside the condo. If a Feral Cat Den is not available or does not fit inside the condo, you may substitute a cat carrier with door propped open.



The den should have a working portal door and properly fitting front panel.

The front panel should stay on the den inside the condo and the portal door should remain open for the cat to use for entry and exit.

The den should be placed at the rear of the condo with the front panel against a wall and the round portal facing the middle of the kennel. The front panel should not face the front of the condo as this does not provide as much privacy.

To clean or feed the cat, reach through the condo door with a stick and close the portal door. You can then safely open the condo door to clean the cage, feed the cat, or remove the cat entirely from the condo unit.

When finished, close the condo door and open the portal door with the stick.

The entire condo should be in a quiet room with as little disruption as possible. To further reduce stress, cover the condo completely.

Also remember to feed the feral cat wet food at night, as most feral cats will only come out in the quiet of night to eat.



NOTE: Feral Cat Dens are very expensive at \$80/ea. and APA! has no budget to purchase them. All dens are donated and very valuable.

It is expected that you take good care of the den, do not lose the front panel, and return the dens in good working order. Do not leave them lying about, leave them in truckport, etc.

HANDLING

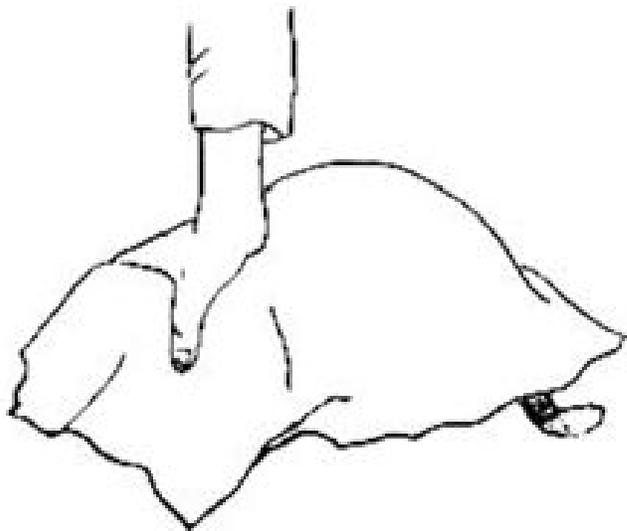
The goal is to never handle a feral cat at all. All efforts should be taken to avoid ever having to touch or pick up a feral cat. Any attempt to move, handle, medicate, or treat a feral cat must only be made by approved, trained personnel.

MOVING

Do not attempt to pick up a feral cat with your hands. Do not try to remove a feral cat from a condo, cage, or carrier with your hands.

To remove a feral cat from a cage or condo when the cage does not have a feral cat den inside, take the front panel of the feral den off. Place the feral den inside the cage and allow, or encourage, the cat to go inside the feral den. You can use the front panel as a shield to encourage the cat to enter the den. Truly feral cats will willingly seek out a dark, safe place like the feral den. Once the cat is inside the den, replace the front den panel and you can now safely move the cat and den about.

Removing an alert feral cat from a carrier or den should only be performed for medical necessities and should only be done by specially trained personnel. If this is necessary, the feral cat den is placed on the exam table. Through the front panel, one or more large bulky towels are inserted to completely cover the cat. Once cat is completely covered, one person will apply firm pressure downward on the cat's shoulders and hips and one person will slide the feral cat den away. The feral cat must continually be kept fully covered and securely held down through the towels while the second person attends to medical needs. Bite gloves may be worn for this.



How to Use a Blanket (or Sack)

Cover the cat with a blanket or sack. Grab it through the cloth and locate the head. Hold it firmly at the base of the skull.

MEDICAL HANDLING

INTAKE

Intake on a feral cat consists only of a cageside exam and administering an FVRCP vaccine, if needed. All other routine intake services will be provided under anesthesia at spay/neuter.

PANLEUK

Follow the same housing instructions above. Feral cats in the Panleuk Ward will not be weighed. Treatment may vary based on what the veterinarian believes can be safely administered. Make sure these cats are offered a buffet of food options each night to encourage them to eat, including junky dry kibble, tuna, baby food, and other enticing options.

INJECTIONS

Feral cats can be given vaccines or injections in the following ways, without handling them:

- Inject through a hole in a feral cat den or live trap. You will need to tilt the den upward so gravity moves the cat toward the rear of the den.
- While the cat is inside a carrier or den, use one or more large, dense towels, cover the cat up completely then firmly press the cat's shoulders to the wall of the den while a second person administers the injection. The person holding the cat in this scenario may use bite gloves if desired.
- Subcutaneous medications are administered by one person covering the cat inside a den or carrier with one of more large, thick towels and pressing firmly down on the cat's shoulders. The second person will peel back a small area of towel to expose the injection site and administer the medication.

ORAL MEDICATIONS

The first choice for oral medications is to try to get the cat to eat the meds in wet food. If that is not successful, administer oral medications in the following way:

- Close the portal door of the feral cat den and rotate the den so the front is facing you. Insert a large, thick towel to cover the cat as much as possible; it's ok if the cat's head protrudes. Wrap one hand in a large, thick towel making sure your fingers are well protected. Open the front panel of the feral den about half-way, enough to get your toweled hand through. The syringe should approach the cat's head from the side. Being quick, as soon as the syringe is at the mouth, inject the medication and withdraw your toweled hand. If the cat hisses, you may also inject the medication then while the mouth is open. You may use bite gloves underneath the towel though they will significantly impair dexterity.

SYRINGE FEEDING

Syringe feeding is done much the same way you administer oral medications. With the cat inside a feral den or carrier, insert a large, thick towel to mostly cover the cat. Wrap one hand in a large, thick towel with only the food syringe tip sticking out. Approach the cat's mouth from the side and inject the food into the mouth. Do not inject food into the mouth when the cat hisses as this is a greater volume of liquid than medication and the cat may aspirate.



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NOTE:

It is common for feral cats to allow medicating and syringe feeding when they are very ill. Often they will even allow a person to groom or clean them. As the feral cat begins to feel better, the cat will become increasingly difficult to handle. Do not assume that a feral cat is safe to handle because you can do so when he or she is ill!