

CARETAKER AGREEMENT & RESPONSIBILITIES

BRICK TNR (COLONY #47)

Ongoing colony management, combined with Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), will promote harmony between colony caretakers, neighbors, and property owners and allow for the colony to diminish naturally over time. It is crucial that the following guidelines be followed to ensure that the colony is being properly managed.

Caretaker defined: A **caretaker** is a person who provides food, water, shelter and medical/health care (to most reasonable extent possible) for a colony of un-owned, free-roaming cats.

Colony defined: A **colony** is any number of un-owned, free-roaming cats that frequent an area seeking food or shelter.

SPECIFIC CARE FOR YOUR COLONY

ONGOING MONITORING/TNR

All the cats in the colony, even those that visit sporadically, will be sterilized, ear-tipped for identification, vaccinated, and returned to their familiar habitat. Make certain any new cats observed in your colony are promptly sterilized.

Why?.....When cats are not sterilized they will display offensive mating behaviors which can quickly become a nuisance. They include: spraying, yowling, fighting, unwanted litters of kittens, and adult cats roaming the neighborhood.

FOOD AND WATER

Cats must be provided with adequate food and water on a daily basis year-round.

Why? When cats do not have adequate food and water, they will seek it in areas where they are not welcome in an effort to avoid starving, for example, in your neighbor's trash or a dumpster.

WHAT TO DO AT THE APPROVED COLONY PROPERTY:

1. Cats should be fed in a designated, inconspicuous area on your property, away from people or high traffic areas where they may create a nuisance or be injured.
2. Feeding areas should be kept neat and clean, empty food cans and plates should be picked up promptly. Food that has gotten wet or spoiled (for instance, food

that has been sitting out all day), should also be discarded, as it can cause illness. Do not feed from cans.

3. Create a small, partially enclosed feeding site to make food/water bowls and the cats less visible, and prevent food from getting wet and spoiled during rain or snow.
4. To avoid attracting wildlife, feed cats in the morning or daylight hours only. Remove leftover food.
5. If the area where the cats are fed is objectionable for one of your neighbors/property owners, gradually move the station to a less objectionable area a few yards away. This can be done in increments and completely in 1-2 weeks. The cats will follow the food.
6. If you are leaving for a time, or cannot feed the cats, arrange to have someone else provide them with food and water on approximately the same schedule.

SHELTER

Cats must be provided with adequate shelter on your property.

Why?..... When cats do not have a warm and dry shelter, they may seek it in areas where they are not welcome, for example under your neighbor's deck, shed, or in a car motor.

WHAT TO DO:

1. Cat shelters should be placed in an inconspicuous area on your property, away from people or high traffic areas.
2. Shelters and feeding stations should be placed so that cats do not need to cross roads or neighbors' property to move back and forth from shelter to food/water.
3. Shelters should be painted in neutral colors, or in some way to blend into the surroundings.
4. Straw is the preferred bedding since it does not hold moisture. **Do Not Use** blankets, towels or other cloth bedding.
5. Remove old straw frequently and replace with fresh, clean, dry straw to reduce fleas and other parasites.
6. Provide enough shelters to house all the cats in the colony.

MEDICAL CARE

Make certain that any cats that are injured or ill receive prompt treatment.

Why?.....For humane reasons, all animals must receive treatment as quickly as possible when they are ill or injured. Beyond humane reasons, ill and injured cats may be very disturbing to other compassionate citizens who may call Animal Control, believing that the animal should be euthanized, rather than living with illness or injury. This can also reinforce the stereotype that cats living outdoors are sickly and diseased and should be destroyed.

Indicators that the cat may be ill / injured include:

- Weight loss
- Failure to eat or drink
- Lethargy

- Discharge from nose and eyes
- Hair loss
- Failure to put weight on a leg
- Visible wound

It is inhumane to allow any animal to suffer.

MAINTAIN MEDICAL RECORDS

Why?.....Brick TNR requires feral cat caretakers and sponsors to maintain original rabies records at all times for inspection by Animal Control upon request. Further, if urgent medical attention is needed, having such information readily available can save valuable time. Maintaining good vet records allows you to show evidence that the feral cats are healthy and fully vaccinated. Records can be used as a tool to educate neighbors who are fearful that the feral cats will pass a disease to them or their pet cats.

ADOPTION OF TAME CATS (Friendlies)

If you believe that a free-roaming cat or kitten in your colony is adoptable, you must make every effort to evaluate the cat and place it in an appropriate home or organization if one is available or identified.

Why?.....Fewer cats in the colony will reduce the incidence of nuisance complaints. Cats which have lived indoors most of their lives often have a harder time successfully adapting to living outdoors. Tame or friendly cats are more likely to fall victim to violence because they do not fear humans. All friendly cats should be scanned for microchip identification. You may find friendly pet cats have been abandoned or lost by their owner. These cats have joined a colony in an effort to survive.

Facts to consider when deciding to find a home for a stray cat:

If a cat is doing well in its current colony, we believe it may be best to leave the cat there. Brick TNR hopes one day there will be homes for all cats, but the current reality is that healthy, adoptable cats are euthanized daily in many shelters due to lack of homes. Advertising a cat as "free to good home" invites persons who trade in animals for research purposes and experimentations or will draw people who will use them as bait for dog fighting training purposes.

FERAL: Truly feral cats are not candidates for adoption. They do not seek or want human companionship or interaction. It takes months or years to socialize a feral cat and even then, the cat may bond only to the person socializing, but may regress to a feral state when introduced to new people. TNR is the most humane option for feral cats.

SEMI-FERAL: Semi-feral cats may be more receptive to socialization but will not be easily adopted. If the cat has been on the street for months or years, it may be as difficult to socialize as a total feral. These cats are also difficult to place, quite often bringing new people into the cat's environment will be overwhelming and cause the cat to regress. If this happens the cat is not a good candidate for adoption. Other behaviors

such as spraying to mark territory or fighting to protect territory can persist when a semi-feral cat is brought indoors.

FRIENDLY: These cats are the easiest to place in a home. Most friendlies are either strays or have been recently abandoned and seek human interaction and want to be touched. Friendlies approach humans readily, they do not regress when introduced to different people or environments.

**Please note: You have not failed if the cat you are working with cannot be socialized for adoption. What you may think is best for a feral or semi-feral cat may not always be in the best interest of the cat. We need to respect the unique ways and manners of each cat.

ADVERTISE through friends, neighbors, and local veterinarians first; then try the newspaper, if all else fails. NEVER advertise "free kitten." Your chances of finding a good home are increased when you check references with someone you know.

YOU MUST HAVE THE CAT / KITTEN SPAYED / NEUTERED BEFORE PLACEMENT IN THE ADOPTIVE HOME.

INABILITY TO CONTINUE PROVIDING CARE

If you are moving or can no longer adequately care for your colony, contact Brick TNR as soon as possible so that alternate caretaker(s) can be identified.

Why?.....It is inhumane to abandon a colony of cats that has grown dependent on you. Cats left alone may starve to death or run the risk of becoming a nuisance as their basic survival needs are not being met, and they may be impounded by Animal Control. Brick TNR will try to assist you in finding a new caretaker.

EXCLUDE CATS FROM UNWELCOMED AREAS

Use humane techniques to discourage or exclude cats from areas where they are not welcome.

Why?.....If you fail to address your neighbors' complaints about excluding cats from specific areas where they are not welcome, you are risking their lives by allowing them to become a nuisance and forcing Animal Control to impound the cats to mitigate the nuisance. All property owners have the right to not have cats on their property. Often times, they simply don't understand why the cats are present, or object to a particular behavior of the cats. Sometimes, they fear the cats may carry disease. It is best to try and determine the specific reason for their objection, educate them, and/or try to mitigate the complaint, if possible, using communication and techniques outlined here. Please do not trespass, argue with the neighbor, or inflame the situation.

MOST PROBLEMS FALL INTO TWO CATEGORIES:

1. Cats are entering an area in which they are not welcome to seek food, water, or shelter.
2. Cats are entering an area in which they are not welcome to eliminate.

Addressing Elimination Issues:

- a. Provide a litter box area for your colony on your property to prevent the cats from using your neighbor's garden or flower bed. The number one complaint about free-roaming cats is inappropriate elimination.
- b. A cat's natural instinct is to eliminate in soft, loose, soil-like mulch, sand or peat moss.
- c. Build a simple wood frame and fill it with sand, dirt, etc. in a quiet area away from the shelter and feeding areas.
- d. Provide the cats with covered outdoor litter boxes.

Excluding Cats from Specific Areas:

- a. Suggest that the area be secured, enclosed or sealed, and offer to help, if practical. Cats often get under decks, crawlspaces, garages, sheds, etc. to seek shelter. These are also areas that can usually be readily sealed.

CARETAKER COPY

COLONY #

I HEREBY WARRANT THAT I HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT CAREFULLY PRIOR TO ITS EXECUTION AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS.

FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE RULES CAN RESULT IN RESCINDING MY RIGHT TO FEED MY COLONY.

SIGNED BY: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

PRINT NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

COLONY LOCATION: _____

DATE: _____

BRICK TNR COPY

COLONY #

MAIL SIGNED COPY TO:

**JOHN TALTY (BRICK TNR)
TOWNSHIP OF BRICK
401 CHAMBERSBRIDGE ROAD
BRICK, NJ 08723**

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