

Information and ideas for **OUTDOOR CAT SHELTERS AND FEEDING STATIONS**

For more information, visit: www.indyferal.org or www.facespayneuter.org or call (317) 638-3223

In cold weather, shelter is more important for stray/feral cats than food.

- Freezing winds, snow and rain can cause frostbite on ears and paws if colony cats cannot find a dry, wind-proof shelter.
- Even though feral cats build thicker coats for winter, they can quickly succumb to hypothermia, particularly in rain and snow when their fur gets wet and doesn't insulate as well.

Plastic Tote Shelter – A shelter anybody can make; suitable for one to two cats.



1. Start with a 30 gallon tote for one to two cats.



2. Cut 5 1/2" diameter hole in tote.



3. Insert Styrofoam cooler and cut hole in styrofoam to match tote.



4. Add straw (not hay).



5. Add styrofoam lid



6. Add tote lid—finished!

After the cats have begun using the tote shelter, consider adding a door flap made of heavy plastic or heavy vinyl for further wind/weather protection.

If you need to house more cats, just purchase a larger plastic tote.

Create a Feeding Station

Protect food from getting wet and spoiled during rain and snow.
Create a small, partially enclosed feeding site to make food and water bowls and the cats themselves less visible.



Rubbermaid storage bin converted into a covered feeding station.

Photo by Neighborhood Cats
www.neighborhoodcats.org

Further information and ideas for **SHELTERS AND FEEDING STATIONS**

Cardboard Box Shelter

For a temporary fix, even a cardboard box is better than nothing - tape the top closed and cut out a hole in one side for a door. Tape or secure a piece of plastic or a large trash bag around the box to make it waterproof. Put newspaper on the bottom and, if possible, place the box under something to protect it further from rain—a piece of wood leaned against a fence, under a tree, etc. If possible, raise the box off the ground where it might get wet.

Styrofoam Cooler Shelter – A quick and simple shelter; suitable for one to two cats.

An adequate shelter for one to two cats can be made from a simple Styrofoam cooler available at any hardware store. Styrofoam coolers can also be obtained from grocery stores, restaurants, or hospitals and, depending on their size, can house additional cats. The removable lid will allow for easy cleaning.



Insulation - Use straw, not hay or blankets

The cats' shelter will be warmer and cozier if you put loose insulating material inside. The material must be dry and loose, so that the cats can burrow into and underneath it. **Straw** is the preferred bedding because it does not hold moisture. Do not use blankets, towels or folded newspaper. Because the cats can only lie on top of these materials, they actually draw out body heat and defeat the purpose.

In extreme cold, consider a “Snuggle Safe” or similar microwave heat pad for cats. These plastic disks are about the size of a frisbee, can be heated in a microwave for 5 to 7 minutes, and stay hot for up to 12 hours. Wrapped in a cloth the cats can't open, these disks are great for providing warmth inside shelters. Snuggle Safe and similar products are available online through retailers such as amazon.com



For a rugged/permanent shelter:
Feral Villa – Cat Shelter

Available only online at
www.feralvilla.com

Placement of Shelters

Cat shelters should be placed in an inconspicuous area on your property, away from people or high traffic. Shelters and feeding stations should be placed so that cats do not cross roads or neighbor's property to move back and forth from shelter to food/water. Provide enough shelters to house all the cats in the colony.



For more shelter ideas and other colony management advice, visit:

www.indyferal.org

To contact IndyFeral/FACE Low-Cost Spay Neuter Clinic:

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