



LARIMERHUMANESOCIETY

## Guide to Working Cats

Working cats are mousers that need to live outside of city limits in a barn or outdoor building. Due to their behavior, these cats are not suited for normal adoption as indoor pets. Some behaviors that have made these cats not suitable indoor cats include chronic house-soiling, displaying behaviors related to overstimulation, issues being carried for short amounts of time and possible fractious behaviors. These cats need to be provided proper food, water, shelter, medical attention and all required vaccinations.

When bringing your cat home, the following guidelines will help your working cat adjust successfully to their new home.

### Preparations

- Ensure your cat has access to food, water and a litter box. These should not be outdoors but in an enclosed area.
- Provide a warm, dry place to sleep and hide, such as a cat house or box with bedding. There should be multiple vertical spaces for these cats to seek refuge in.
- Since working cats will be primarily outside, it is important to have a quick release or safety collar. This will help easily identify them as well as to prevent injury if they get caught or stuck.
- Remove any rodent mitigation measures you've taken previously to ensure that these cats don't accidentally ingest chemicals or other hazardous materials.

### Bringing your cat home

1. Bring the cat to the barn or outdoor building where they will be residing. Ensure that the building is fully closed so there is no way for the cat to escape.
2. Open kennel and allow cat to roam the enclosed area for 2-3 weeks. Keeping the cat contained in the building will establish home territory. This will ensure that once the cat is allowed to roam free they will know where to come back at night to seek shelter.
3. Ensure to bring fresh food and water to the enclosed area daily and around the same time. This will help the cat get socialized to you quicker and start to understand a timeframe for when to be back at the building once allowed to roam freely.
4. After the 2-3 week period, start allowing your cat to roam outside of the building for short amounts of time. Slowly work your way up to allowing the cat free roam for a full day. Make sure to keep bringing fresh food and water daily to help lure the cat back to the building. Lastly, ensure that they still can access the space they were originally confined to. That space has been established as their "safe zone" and will be their main place of hiding.
5. It is highly recommended to bring your working cat back inside at night to prevent them being prey to other larger animals.
6. If the cat starts displaying any medical concerns, it is important to seek medical attention from a veterinarian.

If you have further questions about your animals behavior, contact [behaviorhelp@larimerhumane.org](mailto:behaviorhelp@larimerhumane.org) or call 970-226-3647 ext. 513