

A Message to Cat Owners from Toronto Animal Services

Every year at Toronto Animal Services, we notice the hundreds of cats that are allowed to roam free through the neighbourhoods of Toronto. Outdoor cats live a life that is a mystery to their owners. Your outdoor cat will happily use the neighbour's garden or lawn as a giant sized litter box, causing a great deal of aggravation. The City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 349, prohibits cat owners from allowing their cats to cause damage or nuisance to a neighbour's property. Many outdoor cats are also breeding with other cats, increasing the already overwhelming population of unwanted, homeless cats.

Outdoor cats are prone to getting lost and hundreds of cats die annually on the streets of Toronto, alone and unidentified so that their owners will never know of their demise. Searching for a lost cat, especially if it does not have a city registration tag as required by the City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 349, is a time consuming and often disappointing effort. Less than 6% of lost cats in Toronto are reunited with their owners.

It's a fact that an indoor cat lives a longer, healthier life than that of an outdoor cat. An indoor cat never faces the dozens of dangers waiting outside your front door like cars, predators, other cats waiting to fight, or exposure to disease and parasites. Cats raised indoors are perfectly content with their world. Those that have experienced the outdoors will need some time to get used to being inside, and a cat enclosure in the backyard may be the initial step to help your outdoor cat learn to relax and enjoy the comforts of home.

Most people know that spaying a female cat will avoid unwanted kittens – but don't know the medical and behavioural benefits of having their male cat neutered. Neutered cats are healthier and less likely to mark their territories, reducing the unpleasantness associated with their spraying. Neutering also reduces aggression in male cats and allows them to relax and enjoy being part of the family. The licence fees for a neutered or spayed cat are lower and will soon make up the cost of the operation.

Neutering or spaying your cat and keeping it indoors will keep you in good favour with your neighbours, enhance your cat's chances of living a long healthy life, save you a great deal of potential trouble and veterinary costs, and make your cat a happier family member.

Please be a responsible cat owner and a respectful neighbour!