

LITTERBOX TRAINING

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!

Cats are “evolutionary programmed” to follow an elimination ritual to cover their scent to protect them from predators—this calls for peace and quiet! Place your cat’s litterbox in a low traffic area that gives them some privacy. Places like your laundry room are private and low traffic, but the noises from the washer and dryer can be scary to a cat, so they may choose to eliminate somewhere else. Places like closets and other closed in spaces are also not ideal because the cat needs an “escape route” if it feels threatened while using the box. Perfumes and sprays located around the litter box are another problem if the cat has an aversion to these smells. Find an area that you and your cat both like, and stick with it. Bathrooms, spare bedrooms, and other areas of your home that are open would be favorable. Cats take their litterbox area seriously, and you should too!

TYPE OF LITTER BOX

Generally, cats like an uncovered litter box. Sometimes people will get a covered litterbox thinking that this will give the cat more privacy. However, it is more likely to hold in the smells (think about how much you love to use port-o-pots!). Also, the cat only has one escape route which makes them vulnerable to “ambushes” by children, dogs, and or other cats. These stressful interactions can lead the cat to stop using the box. Two litter boxes per cat is recommended because some cats will not urinate and defecate in the same box. Your box should be low enough that the cat can step into it, and should be twice the size of your cat.

TYPE OF LITTER

Cats generally like unscented, clumpable/scoopable litter best. Many cats have aversions to certain types of odors so litters that have perfumes or additives may cause your cat to avoid its litterbox. They can also stop using the box if they do not like the feel of a harder type of litter. Clumpable/scoopable litter is a softer surface for your cat to go to the bathroom on.

KEEP IT CLEAN!

Cats have very sensitive noses and if they had it their way, they would like their box scooped right after they use it! Scooping at least once a day is important and your cat will appreciate it. If their box is not clean they may choose to go somewhere else or even worse, they may hold it so they don’t have to step into dirty litter. This can cause stones, crystals, or obstructions that can be life threatening if left untreated. Depending on how many cats you have, if you clean the box daily, and are using clumping litter, you might only need to completely dump your litter every two weeks or so. If you notice an odor or the remaining litter looks wet or clumped, you may need to clean more frequently. The litter box itself should be cleaned with a mild dish detergent, as products with ammonia or citrus oils can turn a cat off, and some cleaning products are toxic to cats.