

## Safe Relocation Tips - From Texas Barn Cats

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- Successful confinement periods range from 2 to 4 weeks.
- Make sure the confinement area is located near a place where the cats can hide once they are allowed out of the playpen.
- A long confinement period, such as three to four months, is unnecessary and can be harmful to the cats and to the relocation project.
- The cats being relocated are usually feral (wild). They fear people and are more afraid of you than you will be of them. Expect to be hissed at, spit at, and lunged at when you are close to their holding crate or opening the crate. It's their nature and they should not be scolded or yelled at for it. The cats will often sense your emotions and can tell if you get angry with them. Always, ALWAYS, talk to them in a gentle and soothing voice.
- When necessary to open a cat's crate (to give them food or water or to take out the litter box for cleaning), always keep one hand on the door of the crate so that you can close it quickly if the cat makes an attempt to escape. Always remember to MOVE SLOWLY when the cage door is open and you are reaching in to place food/water, take out the litter pan for cleaning, or changing out soiled newspaper.
- Newspapers are good for keeping the confinement cage from getting too dirty. Sections of newspaper can be placed around the box in the crate without disturbing the cat too much (they will mostly crouch down in their box to hide) and the newspaper can then be pulled out and replaced as needed.
- You can use a long-handled brush and a small brush and dust pan to sweep up scattered litter in the cage after removing soiled newspaper and before putting clean newspaper back in the crates.
- Ensure that the cats have a small box in the crate to hide in. A cardboard box about the size of one that holds a case of longneck beers will fit nicely alongside a medium size litter pan. Be sure to cut the four top flaps off of the box and cut a couple of inches off one side of the box closest to the litter pan so that the cats can easily get in and out of the box.
- There are few barns that really are escape-proof. Cats will escape through the tiniest hole if they get out of their confinement crate. Try to plug all holes, if possible, until after the cats are released.
- If a cat does escape, set food and water out and sprinkle their used litter (for scent) around the barn. Cats often hide for a period of time but will often stay on the premises. Leave them plenty of food and water to prevent them from leaving in search of food.
- New caretakers should make contact with the cats daily by talking to them or by playing a radio softly so that they get used to human voices. Usually, those people who make the effort to communicate with the cats will have the most successful relocations.
- In cold weather, the confinement crates may need to be covered with extra blankets and a heating source provided nearby, if possible.
- If possible, provide a source of light at night. Emergency droplights work great for this and can be hung near the confinement cages and will make it easier for you to check on the cats after dark. It's a good idea to keep a flashlight handy, too.
- Keep a trash can close by the crates during the confinement period to easily dispose of used litter and newspapers from the crate.
- New cats can be relocated into an already established colony. Introduce them slowly, as you would any new cat into your home. In a colony setting, confine the new cats to a large crate or cat playpen in an area where the established cats sleep and eat.
- After a two-to-four-week period, the cats will be quite familiar with each other, and they all should live together in relative peace when they are released.