



Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage Suggested Program & Ordinance Language

The following is a suggested template of best practices, components and language to be incorporated into a Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage (TNRM) program and related municipal ordinances.

In many cases TNRM ordinances are created as an exception to existing animal related ordinances. The ordinances for which TNRM exceptions are necessary typically exist in one or more of several general areas including ordinances that apply to licensing requirements, feeding bans, mandatory sterilization, definition of animal guardianship and abandonment, treatment of stray/nuisance animals, and/or trapping restrictions. A review of local ordinances will clarify what conflicts exist with the implementation of a TNRM program and the ordinances which require modification or clarification. The below suggested template may require specific tailoring to meet the needs of your community.

Sample Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage (TNRM) Program / Ordinance Language

Purpose:

The purpose of establishing a TNRM program is to:

- enable and require the Animal Care and Control Agency to promote the utilization of the approved TNRM program and to regulate the circumstances and procedures under which feral cats are trapped as a means of controlling feral cat population
- humanely reduce or eliminate the number of feral cats through the practice of managing existing or future colonies, work toward eliminating the number of healthy animals being put to death, and promote the adoption of trapped, tamable kittens
- identify the protocol and registration requirements for becoming an authorized feral cat caregiver
- establish the standards and requirements for humane treatment of a feral cat and feral cat colony management
- establish required monitoring and reporting methodology for feral cat caregivers and the Animal Care and Control Agency
- require Animal Care and Control to collect, compile and maintain cat colony statistics as provided by registered feral cat caregivers and report the totals annually to elected officials and the general public
- establish that a feral cat that has been ear tipped is presumed to have been sterilized and vaccinated at least once
- define or redefine certain terms generally relating to the regulation of feral cats

Definitions:

For the purposes of the approved TNRM program and related ordinances the following words

and phrases shall have the following meanings:

- **Cat** shall mean a domestic cat (*Felis Catus*).
- **Feral Cat** shall mean a domestic cat that is or has become unsocialized to humans, whose temperament is one of extreme fear, and who avoids contact with humans.
- **Homeless Cat** shall mean a domestic cat that has been abandoned by his/her guardian or strayed from his/her guardian which is socialized to humans, or is born feral but trapped, tamable and appropriate for adoption.
- **Stray Animal** shall mean any animal at large, off the premises of the guardian and not under restraint by leash and physical control of his/her guardian other than a domestic socialized or feral cat.
- **Feral Cat Caregiver** shall mean a person or organization who is registered with Animal Care and Control to maintain a feral cat or feral cat colony; providing care including: food, shelter, or medical care to the cat(s) in accordance with the established standards of proper care, monitoring and reporting of the TNRM program. Such person shall not be presumed to be the cat guardian.
- **Cat Colony** shall mean one (1) or more feral or homeless cats over four (4) months of age who establish, inhabit and control a territory in common, but which are maintained by a feral cat caregiver.
- **Proper Care** shall mean the provision of food that is free from contamination, and of sufficient quality and nutritive value to meet the known normal daily requirements for the condition and size of the animal and the provision of watering receptacles which are kept clean and have fresh water provided at all times.
- **Guardian** shall mean any person, firm or corporation who acknowledges guardianship of an animal or who harbors or keeps an animal for five (5) or more consecutive days. "Guardian" does not include a person keeping a feral cat as a feral cat caregiver.

(note: whenever possible it is recommended that the term "owner" should be replaced with the term "guardian" in ordinances and language which apply to animals)

Care of Feral Cats:

A person wishing to register as a feral cat caregiver and receive a cat colony permit agrees to the following conditions:

1. Provide proper care by establishing a feeding station and a feeding program as agreed upon with Animal Care and Control. To daily feed the cat colony, including weekends and holidays and ensure access to clean fresh water.
2. Regularly and frequently trap or make reasonable effort to trap the cats over the age of eight (8) weeks and have them spayed or neutered and then returned back to the original location where the cats were originally trapped, with the property owner's permission.

3. To use only humane "live animal" traps, and traps shall be placed in such a manner to protect the animal from the elements including direct sun, rain or snow. Traps shall be checked hourly when in operation and either closed or locked in the open position when not being monitored.
4. Remove kittens from the colony that can be socialized and adopted and evaluate new colony members for socialization and possible adoption.
5. If a domesticated cat, displaying a tag containing the contact information of the guardian, is inadvertently trapped, it shall be released at the location where trapped.
6. If any other animal, including a domesticated dog or wildlife is inadvertently trapped, it will be referred as a priority call to Animal Care and Control for intake or release.
7. To have all trapped cats tested for feline leukemia and feline immune deficiency virus, and to have those who test positive humanely put to death or isolated indoors in appropriate housing.
8. Identify all cats who have been trapped, sterilized and vaccinated by tipping of their ears.
9. Have all trapped cats vaccinated for rabies in addition to any other vaccination or immunization required by state law.

Feral Cat Colony Registration and Tracking:

A person wishing to maintain a feral cat colony shall obtain a cat colony permit issued by Animal Care and Control. The cat colony permit shall be issued to the feral cat caregiver responsible for the cat colony only after the applicant agrees to satisfy all of the requirements and agrees to the standards of proper care approved by Animal Care and Control and defined in the approved TNRM program.

All Authorized Feral Cat Caregivers or Organizations must:

1. Register at no cost with Animal Care and Control as a feral cat caregiver by completing a form which is available at Animal Care and Control.
2. Submit a written plan to Animal Care and Control identifying the individual or organization's name, project leaders, objectives, and implementation plans.
3. Establish a colony tracking system and provide an annual report to Animal Care and Control. Annual reports shall include colony location, number of current members, new colony members, the number of cats sterilized, the number of cats removed for adoption, and public education efforts.
4. Provide for and provide to Animal Care and Control, upon request, documentation verifying the sterilization of all trapped cats and kittens over four months of age by a licensed veterinarian and three-year vaccination against rabies, such cats shall have been marked by cropping the pointed end of the ear (ear tipping).
5. Immediately provide all colony records to Animal Care and Control for inspection in response to a complaint or alleged violation of law.

The cat colony permit shall contain the following information:

1. the name, address and additional contact information of the person to whom the certificate is issued
2. the date of issuance
3. the approximate number of the cats in the colony
4. the location of the colony

5. the veterinarian of record
6. any other information as required by Animal Care and Control
7. the form must be dated and signed by the feral cat caregiver

Exemptions:

The following exemptions, if necessary, should apply to the approved TNRM program.

1. Feral cats trapped by an authorized feral cat caregiver in conjunction with the approved TNRM program shall be exempt from state or local mandated stray hold requirements.
2. A license shall not be required for a feral cat, if such cat is spayed or neutered, vaccinated and/or cared for pursuant to the provisions the approved TNRM program.
3. An authorized feral cat caregiver maintaining a permitted feral cat colony in accordance with the standards prescribed by the approved TNRM program shall be exempt from any bans against the feeding of feral cats or other bans pertaining to the outdoor feeding of stray, wild or "at large" animals.
4. An authorized feral cat caregiver who provides care to or has temporary custody of a feral cat in accordance with the approved TNRM program shall be allowed to return feral cats after required sterilization, testing, vaccinations and ear tipping, without being deemed to have deserted or abandoned the animal.
5. Feral cats under the care of a registered feral cat caregiver shall be exempt from laws relating to public nuisance or stray animals.
6. An authorized feral cat caregiver who is in compliance with the requirements of the approved TNRM program and is making reasonable efforts to trap and sterilize members of the cat colony shall not be required to obtain an unaltered animal permit or subject to penalties for maintaining unaltered animals without a permit.
7. An authorized feral cat caregiver providing care and sustenance to a permitted feral cat colony for any period of time shall not be deemed the guardian of such animals.
8. Nothing shall prohibit the city and/or its agents or employees, including Animal Care and Control or registered feral cat caregivers, from trapping domesticated or feral cats, at large. Trapping by registered feral cat caregivers of feral cats shall be for the purpose of the approved TNRM program.

Certification revenue:

Note: It is highly recommended that registration and permitting be performed at no charge.

However if revenue is to be collected, it is recommended that all certification revenue collected shall be applied to advance the purposes of the approved TNRM program by providing for the spaying and neutering of animals, providing for the testing and immunization of feral cats and/or public awareness and education programs regarding the TNRM program.

Incentives:

Incentives have been found to be more effective than punishment in the efforts to aid populations of feral cats. It is encouraged that communities and legislative bodies establish ways to offset the costs feral cat caregivers bear for sterilization and vaccination. Offsets can be accomplished in a number of ways including through a voucher program or by making the caregivers eligible for low-cost spay/neuter clinics that local governments provide.