



## FACTSHEET

### Moving house with your cat

Moving house is always a busy and stressful time, so you need to try to minimise the effect on your cat. Here are a few hints for making your cat's move a safe one.

#### Plan ahead

Cats like routine. Changes in their daily routine can cause behaviour changes due to stress. Minimise the impact on your cat by packing your belongings slowly over a period of time. If this isn't possible ensure your cat's belongings are the last to be packed to help minimise stress.

Make sure you have a sturdy carry cage. Try getting a carry cage with a metal door as cats can break free from the lightweight plastic type. The last thing you need is a runaway cat! If possible try having your cat boarded or stay with a friend on the day of the move. This will help both you and the cat as there is no chance of the cat escaping if it is not in the house. If this is not an option, try confining the cat to one room with things that are familiar to them for a few days before the move. Place the carry cage in the room a few days before you are moving, with the door of the cage open. This will help the cat get used to the cage; they may even sleep in it.

On the day of the move, keep the cat in the same room and place them in the carry cage at least 30 minutes before you plan to move them. This will give them a chance to calm down. Try to avoid moving the cat in the hottest part of the day. The heat will stress the cat more. Most importantly, never leave the cat alone in a car. The inside of the car can heat up quickly and in summer the car interior can reach 60 degrees Celsius. This could kill your cat within a matter of minutes. If you are travelling a long distance, you will need to have the air conditioning on or a window open as the stress can dehydrate your cat. If your cat isn't used to car trips, cover the carry cage with a towel or blanket as the darkness will help relax the cat.

Prepare your new home in advance. Have a room set up with a litter tray, food and water bowl, as well as a bed for your cat. Have a few things they are used to in the room to make them feel at home. Try placing an igloo style bed or a box in the room as your cat may want to hide for a few days after the move. Don't be concerned if this happens; your cat is trying to adjust to the new surroundings.

#### Settling in

It is best to confine your cat to one room of the house for the first few days after your move. This will help your cat settle in. There will be less risk of them getting out or injured while you are unpacking. Once you have finished unpacking, you can let the cat start exploring the rest of the house. Ensure windows and doors are closed as the house will be new to the cat and you don't want them escaping. Make sure you don't neglect your cat in the move. They need the security of your love now more than ever.

## **Outdoors**

If you have decided your cat will be an indoor/outdoor cat try erecting a cat enclosure. This will ensure your cat can go outside safely. If this isn't an option for you, you should not let your cat outside for at least four weeks after moving. Cats have a very good sense of direction and they may try to go back to your old home if they are let out too soon.

**Never believe the myth; butter on the paws doesn't stop your cat from wandering.**

Once you have been in your new house for one month you should slowly introduce your cat to outside. Try short periods of time outside with your cat. Don't leave them unsupervised at this time. Once you have let them explore outside with you for one week you can start letting them outside alone.

Remember, you should always curfew your cat at night.

## **Identification**

Before moving ensure your cat has a microchip. It is illegal not to have your cat microchipped in NSW. Make sure you update your contact details when you move. Don't forget to change your address or you may not get your cat back if they do wander off. You should think about having a collar and ID tag on your cat as well. If your cat already wears one make sure you change your address on this as well.

Even if you plan to keep seeing your regular vet, when you move, it's important to familiarise yourself with the vets in your new area. If your cat does go missing, checking with local vets is a good place to start looking for the cat. Also, in the case of an emergency with your cat, you will know where the nearest vet is.

## **Routine**

Try to set a routine with your cat as soon as possible after you move. Feed them at set times and try to set times for playing with your cat. This will help them adjust to the move more quickly.

## **Abandonment**

Sadly, many cats are brought to Cat Protection after being left behind when their owners move. For these people it is too much effort to take their pets with them. Abandoning your pet is a criminal offence, fines and possible jail time can result.

You should make sure the house you are moving to is cat friendly. Many people move and then surrender their cat to Cat Protection, or other welfare organisations, when they find out they can't have a cat on the property. This is devastating for the cat as they have been through the stress of a move and then are moved again to a pound or shelter. Not all surrendered cats can find new homes.

When you take on the responsibility of owning a cat, you need to consider any circumstances that may occur and have contingency plans for your cat. Moving is something many of us do, and with a bit of effort, our cats can enjoy their new homes as much as we do.