

# Protocol for Determining Outdoor Release Candidates

## PURPOSE

This document defines the policy and procedures for proper barn cat identification.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all APA! staff and volunteers responsible for assisting with barn cat identification.

## POLICY

All APA! staff and volunteers will assist with barn cat identification in accordance with the documented procedures.

## BACKGROUND

APA! works hard to evaluate the temperaments of all cats before bringing them into the program. However, shelter conditions often make full behavioral evaluations difficult. Therefore, while indoor-only or indoor-outdoor placements are the goal for most APA! animals, some cats may thrive in an outdoor-only or barn placement.

## PROCEDURES

To be considered for barn cat program placement, cat must be healthy, not declawed, and at least 5 months old but no more than 10 years old. (Placements outside of these guidelines are possible but must be approved by the Cat Program Manager.) In all cases, cat must be evaluated by the Barn Cat Manager and/or Cat Program Manager (either in person or via communication with involved parties) before it can be approved for outdoor placement. Below are the release criteria requirements. Exceptions should be cleared with the Cat Program Manager.

### 1. Undersocialization/pronounced fear of humans

#### a. Adult, undersocialized

These cats may be manageable at TLAC, but in foster care, they are not handleable and/ or consistently run away from foster parent.

- Cat must be in program at least 4 weeks and show no or little improvement.
- Cat must be evaluated by Barn Cat Manager and/or Cat Program Manager.

#### b. Kitten, undersocialized

If kitten is pulled into APA's socialization program and is continuing to exhibit hissing, fleeing behavior, aggression or hiding 6 weeks after entering foster care, kitten should be considered a candidate for release.

- If aggressive behavior, hissing, and fleeing are noted in the foster home after 6 weeks, kitten should be evaluated by Barn Cat Manager or Cat Program Manager. If manager determines cat is a poor candidate for continued socialization, kitten will be released.
- If kitten reaches 6 months old in foster and is continuing to exhibit antisocial behaviors and demonstrating limited improvement kitten is automatically a candidate for release.
- At the discretion of the Barn Cat Manager or Cat Program Manager, a socialization-

program kitten that meets one or both of the release criteria above, it may be placed in an experienced foster home for a maximum of 3 weeks to determine kitten's socialization viability.

## **2. Aggressive Cats**

### **a. Adult, arousal aggression or pronounced hyperesthesia**

- Two or more skin-breaking bites must be reported.
- If safe, foster should try play therapy and Feliway for 3-4 days and evaluate for improvement.
- Cat must be in foster care or at APA's facility for at least 3 weeks after neutering or spaying, except in extreme cases.

### **b. Adult, redirected aggression**

- Behavior demonstrated in response to known stressor, e.g., presence of another animal.
- Injuries inflicted on foster or caretaker must be substantial, e.g., deep puncture wounds or slashes.
- Stressor must be something difficult to avoid, such as viewing stray cats outside the window, or loud noises.

### **c. Adult, aggressive or aggression not triggered by known stimuli or dominance aggression**

- Two or more skin-breaking bites must be reported by foster.
- Injuries inflicted on foster or caretaker must be either substantial or frequent.
- Cat must be evaluated by Barn Cat Manager or Cat Program Manager.

## **3. Elimination problems**

### **a. Adult, social, spraying, incontinence**

These cats are viable for outdoor placement where they are guaranteed human interaction (e.g., outdoor-only backyards or barns with frequent human presence).

- Cat must be cleared by veterinary staff as free of UTI.
- Cat must be neutered/spayed for at least 4 weeks before release can be considered.
- Foster must have experimented with non-clumping litter, Feliway, an uncovered and consistently clean litter box, and isolation in a bathroom.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For questions regarding this policy, contact document owner.