

## CONGRATULATIONS ON ADOPTING YOUR NEW CAT FROM MAIN LINE ANIMAL RESCUE

If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at 610-933-0606

Thank you for being part of our family.

For almost 20 years, Main Line Animal Rescue has helped thousands of animals find new homes. Every year, more people are discovering the countless benefits of adopting a shelter pet. Whether this is your first time or have a long history of sharing your life with rescue dogs and cats, MLAR appreciates your compassion and willingness to help animals in need.

When you adopt a pet from MLAR, we become partners for the life of the pet and will do everything within reason to support your ongoing commitment with this animal. You are now part of the MLAR family.

Main Line Animal Rescue receives no state or federal funding. Every day, we accept animals with medical conditions that no other shelter would consider. We believe that these animals also deserve a chance at a good life with a loving family.

Our commitment to the animals we rescue comes at a great cost, emotionally and fiscally every year. We are happy to bear 100% of the emotional burden, but we need your help with the financial support. We cannot do it without you. **Please consider making a donation today!**

### Join us:

Become part of our robust volunteer program, attend our events and support our mission. You can help support the next generation of animals who need our help.

Meet the staff & volunteers, who care for the emotional well-being of the animals, while our clinic staff works tirelessly to address the physical concerns. Meet the cats who jump into the volunteers' arms knowing they are loved for the first time. Meet a dog, whose family moved away, leaving him behind at age 12, to find his own way.

These heart wrenching stories become our warming stories as the animals move towards a happy ending in a forever home.

### GET READY FOR YOUR NEW CAT!

This is a very exciting time and you are getting a new cat!

We send home with your cat:

- Food
- Vet records indicating your new cat's medical history

Cat Foods and Feeding: We will give you a sample of the dry food that your cat has been eating at MLAR. Assuming a traditional diet was given (and the cat is not on a prescription diet), we hope that you will use some guidelines in choosing a food that is a good balanced diet.

Please be aware, once you have allowed your cats to be in the same area, if you have another cat in the house that eats at a different pace, that they are getting an equal amount of nutrition and one is not eating the other cats' food. The types of food you give your cat should be dependent on the cat that you adopted.

- Cats should always have free access to water!
- Easy on the treats, they are full of unwanted, unneeded calories!
- Your new cat also will need separate food and water dishes, kept far away from the litter- box area, to avoid contamination. It is important to keep the dishes clean, and the contents fresh. Cats may reject old food or stale water. Food & water dishes are recommended to be stainless steel or ceramic. Plastic bowls can result in chin acne in cats.

Litterbox and Litter: Your cat must have access to a clean litter box at all times. Cats are naturally fastidious, and most will instinctively use a litter box. The litter box can be simple or extravagant, but most cats prefer simple boxes without hoods. Keep in mind that kittens will need a box that's low enough for them to enter easily. Unscented, fine-textured litter is preferred by the majority of cats. At first, you will choose the type of litter and litter box; later, your cat may demonstrate its preferences. Kittens should NOT have clumping litter. If they ingest any of the litter it will "clump" inside their belly.

Be sure to keep the litter box and surrounding area clean, and scoop the litter at least daily. The litter should be completely changed in the boxes every few weeks or sooner depending on the number of cats you have. Cats may avoid a litter-box area that isn't clean. Also, providing just one litter box may not be sufficient. Animal behaviorists suggest providing as many boxes as you have cats, plus one. For example, if you have two cats, you should have three litter boxes.

Cat Collars: According to the National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy, fewer than 2% of lost cats and only 15-20% of lost dogs are ever returned to their guardians. Just because your cat lives inside is also no guarantee of safety. Although your cat has a microchip when they are adopted from MLAR, a collar and identification tag is the simplest and most economical way to make sure your lost pet finds a way back to you.

Look for "breakaway" collars. They are sturdy, but will helpfully unclasp or break if the dog or cat is caught and struggles.

### **Kitty (even if he/ she is not a "kitten") Proof Your Home!**

Cats and kittens are notorious for chewing on things. Even many adult cats will check out their surroundings by tasting. It's best to put safety first when you bring a cat of any age into your home. Cell phone charger cords are particularly attractive to some cats.

Poisonous Plants! Cats like to chew on grass and plants inside and outdoors. But you'd be surprised by the number of plants that are irritating, dangerous, and even deadly to cats if eaten. Even non-poisonous plants can cause vomiting and diarrhea. Keep dangerous plants out of reach or, better yet, don't have them in the house at all. If your cat likes green stuff, purchase or grow your own cat grass.

Lock up your cleaning supplies. Some have a very attractive taste to a curious kitten.

Look inside the dryer before closing the door, and keep it closed when not in use. Cats love to hole up in dark, quiet places, which can be a recipe for a tragedy. Kittens often climb into refrigerators, freezers, and dresser drawers, so check these, too, before closing them.

Make sure your screen door and window screens have secure, sturdy latches. Don't run the risk that your cat could slip out unnoticed.

Indoor cats don't wear down their claws as quickly as outdoors ones do, so they can overgrow. Untrimmed claws can grow into a cat's paw pads, leading to infection, pain, and difficulty walking and using the litter box. Check your cat's claws every couple of weeks to see if they need to be trimmed. Trimming claws is easy. Please ask for a demonstration if you are unfamiliar with how to do it.

Declawing is never a good option for a cat. Declawing traditionally involves the amputation of the last bone of each toe. If performed on a human being, it would be like cutting off each finger at the last knuckle. It is an unnecessary surgery that provides no medical benefit to the cat and can lead to health and behavioral issues.

### **The first few hours and days**

Settling in...

We strongly recommend that you have a small room prepared for your new cat's homecoming. A bathroom is a good option, since it has water available, but a guest bedroom is also a good option. Make this home for a week to ten days. This gives the cat the time to become comfortable in their new space and realize that they are being fed and cared for. If you have other cats, or dogs, this gives them an opportunity to sniff this new stranger under the door and get to know them before meeting!

During the first few days, take special care to spend plenty of time with your new cat. You might find that he/she doesn't have much of an appetite. This is usually due to nerves and they will eat eventually. Don't be tricked in to giving all kinds of goodies etc. because then you might have an upset stomach and a nervous cat...and a mess to clean up! Just be as consistent and relaxed and they will eat when they are ready. A little wet food might just get them started again.

Start the first day using the sound of a shake of treat bag to get your kitty to come when called. If your cat gets loose, do NOT chase him/her; this will make him/her run away from you! Shake the treat bag and hold out a treat and offer it to him/her. Sit down and be still talk in a

very low voice to your cat and offer the treat. If this doesn't work then walk quietly towards the house encouraging the cat in a soft voice to come with you.

Where will your cat sleep? It's your call, some people like to have the cat sleep in the bed with them, however remember that some cats are nocturnal! Many people set up the cat in another room overnight. You can choose whatever works best for you! Many people have trouble sleeping with the cat in the room, or some people suffer from allergies and still love their pets, in which case, make your bedroom your allergy free zone, and let the cat sleep elsewhere, your sofa is a good option!

Training is FUN! The chances are pretty slim that your cat will end up on TV's stupid pet tricks, but we can all try! Training can be fun, but more important, it can save a life! Clicker training can be fun and good mental, physical stimulation for your cat. You can look up some methods on the internet...give it a try

Scratching Posts are a great investment for your home, as they will give your cat a place to scratch and stretch to his heart's content, instead of using your furniture. Most cats prefer a vertical post, covered in sisal rope, with a large base so they can get a good workout without making the post tip over. Corrugated cardboard scratchers are also a good option. Cats can really get their claws in to both sisal and cardboard. Scratching posts with carpet will encourage your cat to scratch your carpets or rugs and should be avoided.

Emergency Plan:

Do you have an emergency plan? What animal emergency hospital is your doctor affiliated with? Do you have a first aid kit for your pet? A disaster kit? Make one up and keep it in a safe place. No power for 10 days can be tricky with a pet!

Children and Cats

We do our best to match children-friendly cats with families with children. Still, it's very important to slowly and gently introduce your cat to life with children. Your cat is in an unfamiliar place and may feel nervous. Caution is important until your new kitty settles in.

Other pets and Cats

It is recommended to allow your new cat a few days (at least) to adjust to your home before introducing to your current pets. Slower introductions are usually much more successful. Please ask the staff and volunteers for tips on how to introduce your new cat to your current pet.

Here are tips to remember:

Supervise all interactions between children and your cat. Watch for signs of stress in the cat. Cats don't all show the same signs when it comes to stress and they can be easy to overlook. You might attribute your cat's change in behavior to something else or the stress effects might happen so gradually that you aren't even aware that there is a change in how your cat

behaves. If your cat tends to hide on a regular basis, it can be easy to not notice that her stress level has increased. Signs of stress may include:

- loss of appetite
- excessive grooming (which may result in a condition known as psychogenic alopecia)
- less interaction with family members
- hiding
- change in the relationship with companion cats
- elimination outside of the litter box
- aggression

Teach the children to approach the cat gently and respectfully. Don't allow the children to hug the cat or put their face near them – instead, teach them to pet him/her underneath his chin or on his chest. Children should never be allowed to crawl on the cat, pull his tail or ears, pick him/her up, or “ride” him/her. One child at a time should interact with the cat.

Have a “safe” area where your kitty can go if they want to take a break from the children

Your Relationship with your Veterinarian

Find someone you really like and respect! Know ahead of time what your cat needs and don't be convinced to purchase more than you need/want. There are many veterinarians in practice, so if you feel uncomfortable about something, talk to your vet, and if it doesn't feel right to you, then get another opinion.

You should see your vet at least once a year. Does your Kitty need vaccines? Does your cat need a dental (some cats need them yearly as they get older)?

Microchip: While there, ask your vet to scan your cat for a microchip, if he or she doesn't find it then it has migrated somewhere else on your cat. Every animal that leaves MLAR has a microchip, so if there is not one found, please come see us and we will microchip your pet again at no cost.

## **IMPORTANT TOPICS ON YOUR CONTRACT**

Understanding your contract with Main Line Animal Rescue:

Prior to signing your adoption contract, someone will go over it with you. These are the things that you are committing to in your contract:

- You will be careful to not allow this cat to bite; we are not responsible if they do
- You have not misrepresented who you are and where you live
- You will assume veterinary expenses going forward
- You will not give this cat away, if you can't keep him, he must come back to MLAR

- You will not declaw this cat
- You will treat this cat in a humane and loving manner
- You will call us if the cat gets lost (We have volunteers who are very experienced finding lost pets.)
- Main Line Rescue requires its cats to live indoors only. This cat is never to be allowed outside, even for a very short time.
- Main Line Animal Rescue has joined in a contract with you and we will do everything within reason to support your ongoing commitment with this cat.

Please call us if needed!

Send photos and updates to [info@MLAR.org](mailto:info@MLAR.org) or like us on Facebook

MAIN LINE ANIMAL RESCUE, INC. P.O. Box 89, Chester Springs, PA 19425

Telephone: (610)933-0606 Fax: (610)933-0116 Email: adopt@MLAR.org

**MLAR ADOPTION CONTRACT - CAT**

Name of Animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Breed/Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ADOPTION**

I/We agree to the conditions set forth in this Agreement. In the remainder of this document, the Applicant(s) will be referred to as the ADOPTER(S) and Main Line Animal Rescue will be referred to as MLAR.

1. The ADOPTER(S) understand there are costs involved in maintaining a cat, and hereby assume full responsibility for food bills, health care, grooming, training, boarding, vaccinations and prevention of parasites, fleas and ticks, general well-being of any cat adopted from MLAR. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_
2. The ADOPTER(S) agree cat will always be kept indoors. This cat is not allowed outside. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_
3. The ADOPTER(S) agree not to have the cat declawed, understanding that declawing is an inhumane and painful surgery, consisting of amputation of the first knuckle. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_
4. This cat has the following known medical condition:

**Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

5. The ADOPTER(S) agree to contact MLAR immediately if cat were to ever get loose and become lost.  
Contact: 610-933-0606  
**Initial** \_\_\_\_\_
6. The ADOPTER(S) are aware the cat must be returned to MLAR if, at any time or for any reason the ADOPTER(S) cannot keep the cat. The cat must not be abandoned, sold or given to any other party or in any manner be transferred to different ownership. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_
7. The ADOPTER(S) agree to allow MLAR to periodically check to confirm the cat's acceptance of new environment and family and to

ensure compliance with all Adoption Agreement conditions. This may include a home visit. MLAR retains the right to visit and examine cat at any time, if there is good cause for concern. MLAR also retains the right to reclaim cat if warranted because of neglect, abuse, inadequate home or veterinary care or breach of contract. The ADOPTER(S) agree to relinquish custody of cat to MLAR immediately upon request without legal writ or order until the situation warranting the reclamation is rectified.

**Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

8. The ADOPTER(S) agrees to notify MLAR of any changes in address or phone number.

**Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

9. The ADOPTER(S) agree to provide quality veterinary care on a yearly basis for cat including all necessary vaccines recommended by your veterinarian. MLAR recommends a wellness/welcome visit to establish a health baseline with your veterinarian. We strongly recommend that you continue the diet that MLAR is currently providing and gradually switch to your choice of food over a 2-week period.

**Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

10. The ADOPTER(S) understands the cat may carry diseases and parasites that may be transmissible to humans. I/We understand that these zoonotic diseases may be transmissible to anyone, but people with suppressed immune systems (due to immune disorder, cancer treatment, organ transplantations, etc.) are at greater risk, and I/we hold MLAR harmless. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

11. The ADOPTER(S) agree MLAR shall not be responsible for any damages, cost or expenses, liquidated or otherwise, incurred by the adopter resulting from a placement including, but not limited to damage or injury to persons or property by the cat, and in this connection, the adopter releases, indemnifies and holds MLAR harmless from any and all liability of any and every nature and cause directly or indirectly relating to placement. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

12. The ADOPTER(S) here by forever release, discharge and covenant to hold harmless MLAR and any other person, firm or corporation charged or chargeable with responsibility or liability, their heirs, administrators, executors, successors and assigns, from and all claims of damages, cost, expenses, loss of service, actions and cause of action belonging to the said ADOPTER(S) arising out of any act or occurrence for the present or future time, and particularly on account of the adoption of a cat.

**Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

13. The ADOPTER(S) understands that there is always a risk of being scratched and bitten. They acknowledge and certify that they must have their own medical insurance and that MLAR will never be responsible for any medical care ADOPTER(S) (or household member) may require due to any injury sustained directly or indirectly from the adopted animal or any activity in which the ADOPTER(S) might engage in.

The ADOPTER(S) are fully aware and does understand that any animal may bite especially if provoked, if scared, sick or injured. Therefore, ADOPTER(S) agree to use caution when allowing any unfamiliar adult or any age child to be near this cat.

**Initial** \_\_\_\_\_



14. While every effort is made to provide accurate history and assessment of a cat, MLAR does not warrant a cat regarding medical status or behavior or disposition, or fitness for any special purpose. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_
15. The ADOPTER(S) hereby declare(s) that no representations about the nature of the cat, or any representation regarding the nature and extent of the legal liability or financial responsibility have induced the ADOPTER(S) to make this release and indemnity agreement. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_
16. INDEMNIFICATION: MLAR (AND ITS OFFICERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS) ("INDEMNIFIED PARTIES") SHALL NOT BE LIABLE ON ANY THEORY OF LEGAL LIABILITY INCLUDING THE SOLE OR CONCURRENT NEGLIGENCE OF THE INDEMNIFIED PARTIES ONCE THE ANIMAL IS UNDER THE PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY CARE AND CONTROL OF THE ADOPTER(S), FOR ANY INJURY, DEATH OR DAMAGE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CAUSED BY THE ANIMAL. TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW, ADOPTER(S) SHALL INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS THE INDEMNIFIED PARTIES FROM AND AGAINST ANY AND ALL LIABILITIES, OBLIGATIONS, CLAIMS, DEMANDS, CAUSES OF ACTION, LOSSES, EXPENSES (INCLUDING LEGAL FEES), DAMAGES, INCLUDING CLAIMS FOR PROPERTY DAMAGE, BODILY INJURY AND/OR DEATH, ARISING OUT OF, BASED UPON, OCCASIONED BY OR IN CONNECTION THE RELEASE OF AN ANIMAL TO ADOPTER(S) CONTROL (WHETHER PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY) REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT CAUSED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF ANY PARTY INDEMNIFIED HEREUNDER.

IT IS THE EXPRESSED INTENTION OF ADOPTER(S) THAT THE DEFENSE AND INDEMNIFICATION PROVIDED FOR IN THIS PARAGRAPH IS DESIGNED AND INTENDED TO PROTECT MAIN LINE RESCUE (AND ITS OFFICERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS) FROM, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANY ATTACK, BEHAVIOR OR OTHER ACTION BY THIS ANIMAL, AND FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANY ACT OR OMISSION OR NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE ADOPTER(S) AND ANY ACT OR OMISSION OR ANY SOLE OR CONCURRENT NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF MLAR (AND ITS OFFICERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS) IN OBTAINING CUSTODY OF ANIMAL, IN PROVIDING CARE FOR THIS ANIMAL, OR IN FAILING TO PROVIDE TIMELY OR ADEQUATE WARNING TO ANY PERSON CONCERNING THIS ANIMAL. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

17. In the event that MLAR brings an action or proceeding to enforce any of the terms of this Agreement, or for damages for breach of the Agreement, MLAR shall be entitled to recover its reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred as a result of such action. The terms of this Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and ADOPTER(S) agree to be subject to the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania Courts (including both the Commonwealth and Federal Courts) for purposes of MLAR enforcing the terms of this agreement. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

I HEREBY ACCEPT POSSESSION AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS ADOPTED CAT and release and waive any rights against MLAR for any damages to person or property caused by this animal once the animal is in my possession and under my control either temporarily or permanently. I have read and understand this entire agreement, and do hereby agree to ALL the above terms.

Adopter(s): (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Perils in the Life of an Outdoor Cat

by Traci M. Jones

One decision every cat owner must make is whether or not their feline friend will be allowed outdoors. Many people feel that keeping their kitties indoors deprives them of a full life. However, one must consider that the average life span of a totally outdoor cat is about a year and a half, while a totally indoor cat is expected to live upwards of 15 years.

Aside from the obvious dangers of car fan belts and tires, toxic plants, dogs and cruel people, there are many hidden dangers to cats allowed outdoors. Life-threatening dangers include:

- Diseases for which we currently do not have vaccines for (Feline Aids),

or vaccines that are not reliably effective (Feline Leukemia, Feline Infectious Peritonitis).

- Heartworm. Yes, it is true that a cat can get heartworm, through mosquito bites. Shorthairs are at higher risk than longhairs.
- Antifreeze. Its sweet taste is irresistible to cats, and a cat who has walked through a small pool of antifreeze and cleans its paws has ingested a fatal dose.
- Skin cancer. Light colored kitties (especially white) are at risk for skin cancer of the ears due to exposure to direct sunlight.
- Hanging/choking. Those neat little cat collars which do not provide breakaway or stretch releases have killed many a cat.

- Fighting among outdoor kitties not only spreads disease, it can result in painful abscesses which require medical attention (an untreated abscess can kill a cat). Unaltered tom cats are prime candidates for such fighting, not to mention they will impregnate any and all receptive females they come upon.
- Toxoplasmosis. A single celled organism that cats can ingest while eating prey that has been exposed. Not only can it kill a cat, it is contagious to people and can result in severe birth defects to human babies whose mothers are exposed during pregnancy. Wearing rubber gloves while handling litter pan duties and gardening is highly recommended for pregnant women. Finding another home for your cherished pet is NOT necessary.

As if that is not enough food for thought, consider our wildlife. Cats kill many songbirds each year, plus rabbits, squirrels, mice, chipmunks, reptiles, etc. Most areas are not overrun with these creatures, and cats are not performing a necessary service by killing them. Being neat creatures, cats bury their feces. It's not a lot of fun to be digging in your garden and get a handful of that! Not to mention that kitty excrement is not an effective fertilizer, or that your neighbor will probably not see the humor of their gardens being dug up and destroyed...Non-life-threatening things outdoor cats are exposed to can serve to make our human lives miserable also. Fleas, ticks and mites would just as soon bite you as they would the family pet, and getting them out of your home is expensive and time-consuming.

These parasites can also carry life-threatening diseases. Kitties who come inside with motor oil or used chewing gum on their bodies and sit on your antique sofas cause quite a stir, also.

Ringworm is sometimes contracted by a cat while outdoors digging in the dirt; this fungus is very contagious to humans. Cats do not observe property lines by any means. To them, a fence is something to climb on, not a barrier. Your neighbor may not have a problem shooting, trapping or poisoning your family pet.

There are so many obvious benefits to keeping your cat indoors. Indoor cats are no lazier or less happy than their outdoor counterparts. Provide a window perch for them, put out a bird feeder for entertainment. There are so many toys available for cats now, both the interactive kind (a stick with a string with something fun on the end), and the toys that do not require human intervention. Avoid toys which have small parts that can come off and cause choking or gastrointestinal problems. A paper grocery bag will provide hours of entertainment for your kitty. A scratching post of some kind is a necessity.

An indoor/outdoor cat can easily be made a totally indoor cat with perseverance on your part. They may resent their confinement for a short time, but they will adjust. Another option is a safe outdoor enclosure. It must be carefully constructed, as you need to keep other animals OUT, as well as your cat in. Screen porches work well, too, just be sure to give the kitty some way to get back into your house if they need to. Many cats live their entire lives without ever setting foot on grass. The difference in their life expectancy as well as quality of life speaks for itself.