

## Fact Sheet

# Keeping your cat safely contained

Contrary to popular belief, cats do not have to roam outdoors to be happy. Just as dogs must be confined to the owner's property, Ipswich City Council also requires cats to be contained to their property at all times.

Cats allowed to roam freely outdoors are more likely to be injured during cat fights, dog attacks and traffic accidents. They are also more at risk of being exposed to poisons, ticks, fleas and diseases. Because of this cats that roam freely outdoors have an average lifespan of three years compared to confined cats that can live to 15 years or longer.

Outdoor cats (even those well fed) can also seriously injure or kill wildlife and often cause neighbourhood disputes because of fighting, spraying and defecating on other people's property. These problems can be avoided by containing your cat to your property.

Providing their basic needs are met, cats enjoy longer and healthier lives when safely confined. There are many options available to keep your cat contained to your property.



### Keeping your cat indoors

Most cats adapt well to living indoors, particularly from an early age. However, adult cats that are used to roaming may have more difficulty adjusting. If this is the case, start by keeping your cat inside at night and gradually increase the time it is confined. If your cat still has difficulty adjusting, consult your local veterinarian or animal behaviourist.

It is important to have an interesting indoor environment for cats. Providing toys and daily play sessions can prevent your cat becoming bored or developing behavioural problems.

### Cat proof your fence

Cat proofing your fence provides your cat with free access to your entire garden. Before you start any fence alterations it is a good idea to watch where and how your cat gets out of your garden, this may reveal escape points that you had not previously considered. Trim trees and shrubs and remove any objects leaning against the fence.

Larger tree trunks may need to be banded with Colorbond steel or clear polycarbonate. Ensure you seal off all gaps in and underneath the existing fence line and gates. Lock any gates that are rarely used and fit self-closing springs and latches to other gates.

### Netting

Create a net barrier at the top of your fence with inward facing overhangs. Netting works best when it is floppy so your cat feels unstable and unsafe if it does try to climb it.

Take care to ensure the holes are small enough to prevent your cat becoming caught in the netting. If you are DIY inclined you could erect this fencing yourself or there are companies who offer installation.

## Fence paddles

Another option is a commercial product such as the Oscillot Fencing System. This involves attaching purpose-made rolling paddles along the top of your existing fence. If your cat tries to scale the fence the paddles spin preventing it from gaining traction.

## Attached enclosure

An enclosure attached to your house, garage or shed gives your cat access to its favourite spots inside while still being able to enjoy the great outdoors.

A simple solution is to utilise an existing area, such as a section between the house and fence or close in a veranda, patio or courtyard. This can be achieved by using a lightweight support system and covering it with netting. Alternatively, a cat door or window opening into a commercially bought maze of tunnels and cages can also provide hours of entertainment. They are often sold as modules so you can add to your enclosure as you choose or as your budget allows.

## Free-standing enclosure

You can purchase a free-standing enclosure or design your own. Designs for building your own are available on the internet. Contact your local distributor if you'd like to purchase a ready-made structure. Cats love to move around and keep watch over their territory. They need a warm dry bed, shelter and shade. They enjoy platforms at different heights and climbing structures too. When you take your cat to and from the enclosure ensure it cannot escape. Some people harness train their cats or use a cat carry cage.

## Keeping your cat safely contained

Always check with Council before making changes to your property to ensure you abide by local laws.

## For more information

For more information on building or purchasing cat containment fences or enclosures consult your local veterinarian, reputable shelter or pet supplier.

To find out more about responsible cat ownership, go to [lpswich.qld.gov.au](http://lpswich.qld.gov.au) or phone (07) 3810 6666.



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