

VILLAGE OF PALMETTO BAY Feral Cat Trap Neuter and Return Policy

The foregoing is hereby approved and shall become effective on the date noted below.

Approved by: Edward Silva, Village Manager

Date: November 20, 2015

1. PURPOSE AND POLICY OBJECTIVE

- a. Purpose: This policy is applicable to all feral cats located within Village of Palmetto Bay Parks and Recreation facilities, public and private properties.
- b. Policy Objective: It is intended to outline the management of feral cats (*domestic cats that have gone wild*) and other nuisance animals located within the boundaries of the Village of Palmetto Bay.

2. DEFINITIONS:

Animals - "Animals" shall mean any non-human living vertebrate creature, including but not limited to, all dogs, cats, rabbits, raccoons, geese, ducks, pigeons, and similar fowl.

Housing - "Housing" shall mean any building, shed, cage, pen or similar structure used for the keeping of animals and fowl.

Enclosure - "Enclosure" shall mean any uncovered, enclosed parcel of land where animals or fowl are kept.

Feral Cats Defined: Feral cats are 'wild' offspring of domestic cats and result from pet owners' abandoning and/or failing to neuter their pets. They generally do not allow handling by humans and must be trapped in order to be presented to a veterinarian for care.

Nuisance - "Nuisance" shall mean whatever is dangerous or detrimental to human life or health and whatever renders or tends to render soil, air, water, or food impure or unwholesome.

Trap-Neuter-Return: "Trap, Neuter, Return" (TNR) is a humane, non-lethal method of managing existing colonies of feral cats and represents a legitimate response to existing colonies of cats with caretakers. Cats are trapped, vaccinated, neutered and then returned to their "home" for release.

3. GENERAL POLICIES REGARDING FERAL/FREE-ROAMING CATS

Policy regarding removal feral cats

- a. There is no leash law in Miami-Dade County (MDC) pertaining to cats. Unlike dogs, cats are permitted to roam freely.
- b. Animal Services does not respond to complaints of stray or feral cats.
- c. The Village will respond to only unowned, free-roaming feral cats that will be trapped, neutered and potentially returned or relocated.
- d. Citizens may lawfully place humane animal traps on their private property to capture any cats that may enter. However, if the cats are on private common grounds, the homeowners association would need to initiate the removal process.

Policy regarding small kittens

Because the mortality rate of feral kittens is 75% on average, small kittens will be tamed and adopted or humanely euthanized.

Policy regarding cats and caretakers

- a. It is illegal to remove animals and "relocate" them without the property owner's permission and a period of confinement for the animals to become adjusted.
- b. The feeding of stray or feral cats does not constitute ownership.
- c. Any person providing care and sustenance to any fowl or other animal shall be deemed to be the owner of said animal and shall be subject to all the regulations of this ordinance.
- d. No person shall feed or provide sustenance to any animal on public property or the private property of others, except with permission of the property owner.

Policy regarding liability

- a. All individuals are required to sign release forms prior to receiving animal traps.
- b. Rabies vaccination is recommended for individuals that trap feral cats for TNR.
- c. Humane trapping and safety instructions will be provided.
- d. If an individual is scratched or bitten by a feral cat, they will be instructed NOT to release the cat and to bring it to Miami Dade County Animal Services for appropriate rabies quarantine.

4. TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN

The Trap-Neuter-Return program, or TNR, is an effective and humane method used to stabilize community cat populations. It is program free of charge to all Miami-Dade County residents *providing free spay/neuter surgeries for healthy community cats.*

The TNR service includes:

- a. Sterilization
- b. Rabies vaccine
- c. FRCPC (feline booster shot)
- d. Ear tip
- e. Delivery back to the community

5. TRAPS/TRAPPING OF FERAL CATS

Citizens may lawfully place humane animal traps on their private property to capture any cats that may enter. However, if the cats are on private common grounds, the homeowners association would need to initiate the removal process.

- a. Miami Dade County Animal Services and the Village of Palmetto Bay Public Works Department have a limited number of cat traps available on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- b. Cat traps may be rented from MDC Animal Services or the Village of Palmetto Bay and must be picked up and set up by the resident.
- c. A \$50 refundable deposit is required for rental of trap and must be paid by cash, credit card or check. The \$50 refundable deposit will be held for 10 days.
- d. Residents who do not return the rented traps within 10 days forfeit the deposit.

If trapping the animal is very difficult, consider hiring a private animal removal service which can do the work for a fee.

Trapped cats must be transported by the resident to Animal Services. The animal is accepted without charge at the *Animal Services shelter*. **Animal Services does not pick up cats in traps.**

Stray or feral cats that are surrendered to ASD will be evaluated for potential adoption, but the vast majority will be spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and released back to the community as part of our TNR program.

The TNR program is an effective and humane method used by MDC Animal Services to stabilize community cat populations. Over time the stabilized population declines resulting in the humane reduction in free roaming cat populations.

The TNR program is available free of charge to all Miami-Dade County residents. There is no hold period for stray cats surrendered to MDC Animal Services.

6. SHELTER LOCATION

Shelter Address:

7401 NW 74 Street
Medley, Florida 33166

7. FINES AND PENALTIES

Abandoning animals is animal cruelty. To relocate in a public place or to abandon an animal that has been trapped is a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000, or by both imprisonment and a fine.

For more information, visit [Florida Animal Control Association](#) and [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#).