



ALLEN COUNTY

SPCA

YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR SHELTER. YOUR PETS.

LITTERBOX FAQs

Location

People often want to put the litterbox somewhere out of the way, like the basement, to minimize the odor and keep the rest of the house less messy. However, that can lead to the new cat not remembering where the box is or not wanting to go next to an appliance or on a cold cement floor. A compromise must be made. The box should be in a place where your cat gets some privacy, but is also conveniently located. If the litterbox is in a closet or bedroom, make sure the door is wedged open from both sides to make sure the cat doesn't get locked in or out. Depending on the location, you could even cut a hole in the closet door or add a swinging door. If the litterbox is on a smooth, click, or cold surface, put a small rug underneath.



Type of Litter

Research shows that most cats prefer fine-grained litters because it's softer. There are many different options that are fine-grained. If your cat was previously outdoors and you think they might try to go to the bathroom in your houseplants, you can try adding potting soil with the regular litter. Pellet-type litters or litters made from citrus peel are not recommended. Once you find a litter your cat likes, don't change types or brands. Changing it suddenly could result in your cat not using the box. Many cats don't like scented litters. For the same reason, it's not a good idea to have an air freshener near the litterbox. Keeping the box clean and a thin layer of baking soda on the bottom of the box will help with any odor.

Number of Litterboxes

You should have at least as many litterboxes as you have cats. It is recommended to have two for your first cat plus an additional for every other cat in the house. This will prevent your cats from not using the litterbox because it's already occupied. It can also be a good idea to have the litterboxes in several locations and on each level of the house so that no cat can guard the litterbox area and prevent others from using it.

Type of Litterbox

There are a variety of litterboxes to choose from and it may take some time to find the perfect one for your cat. Some are covered and some aren't. While most people would prefer a covered one, there can be some issues that come from it. With a covered box, you may forget to clean it, it traps the odors inside so you actually have to clean it more often, and it may not be big enough for your cat to move around in. That being said, a covered litterbox can provide more privacy, which is especially helpful for timid cats.

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Cleaning the Box

The litterbox should be cleaned daily. How often you need to change the litter depends on the number of cats, number of litterboxes, and type of litter you use. Twice a week is a general guideline for clay litter, but depending on the circumstances, it may need to be changed more often. Scoopable litter can go for about two to three weeks before needing to be changed. If there is an odor or much of the litter is wet or clumped, it should be

changed. Don't wash the litterbox with strong smelling chemicals or cleaning products since this can make your cat not want to use it. Soap and water works just fine.



Liners

Some cats don't mind having a liner in their litterbox, but others do. It may take some experimentation to see if your cat is okay with the liner or not. If you do use a liner, make sure its anchored in place so it doesn't get caught by your cat's claws and moved around.

Depth of Litter

Most cats won't use litter that's more than about two inches deep. Some long-haired cats actually prefer less litter and a smooth, slick surface, such as the bottom of the litterbox. The litterbox needs to be cleaned regularly and adding more litter doesn't change that.

"Litter-training Cats"

You can't really "litter-train" your cat like you can house-train a dog. A cat doesn't need to be taught to use the litterbox as long as it's in an acceptable, accessible place and follows the suggestions above. Trying to train your cat to do anything in the litterbox can actually cause a negative association with the litterbox.