



The Advocate for Animals
SINCE 1867



Congratulations!

You've just brought home some hard working new Mousebusters!

Below are some tips and tricks for how to make the transition for your working cats as smooth as possible.

Relocating Your Mousebuster

As discussed before your adoption, getting your cats accustomed to the working lifestyle is a bit of a transition. But don't worry! We've created this packet to help guide you through it.

Recommended Supplies

- A large cage or enclosure that should:
 - o Be large enough for the cats to move around
 - o Have room for bedding, food, water, and the litter box
 - o Not have a large door – the bigger the door, the better the cat's chances of slipping out when you go in to clean the box and bring fresh food and water
 - o **Hint: XL dog crates work nicely!*
- A large blanket, sheet, or tarp to cover the cage
- Blankets, towels, or other bedding
- A hidey space for the cats (ex: box, carrier with the door removed, etc.)
- Sturdy, hard to tip dishes (recommended: straight-sided heavy ceramic)
- Litter box and litter
- Dry cat food
- Feral cat trap
- Optional: toys, catnip, cat treats, canned cat food



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Before you picked up your cats, you were sent a list of recommended supplies (see above). We highly recommend that you set up the relocation area before releasing the cats – it will make your life easier!

Creating your Relocation Space

The purpose of the relocation space and transition period is to help the cats adjust to all the new sights, sounds, and smells of their environment; you included! Your new working cats need time to get comfortable with this new space in order for them to be more likely to stay in the area once they are free to roam.

Your cats should be kept in this crate for the first ***2-4 weeks***.

Some key tips include:

- **Location, location, location!**

Where the cage for the transition period is matters, so make sure it allows the cats to:

1. Be near the center of the mice activity; close enough that they can observe, but far enough that they won't feel threatened
2. View the area where they will eventually roam

- **The enclosure used for transition period should be sheltered from weather and other animals**

- o If using a chicken coop, it should have a secure roof and sides
- o If using a crate, it should be inside a building or larger secure structure

On the next page, you will find a list of steps to guide you through setting up the ***Ideal Relocation Crate***.



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Relocation Crate Steps

Setting up the Crate

1. Line the floor of the crate with newspaper or bedding.
 2. Place the hidey box in the back corner of the crate.
 - a. The hidey box should be big enough to hold **2 cats**.
 - b. The hidey box is where the cats will sleep and hide.
 - c. Put soft bedding inside the box.
 - d. The opening of the box should face the side of the crate so that the cats can hide there when you go in to refill food or clean the crate.
 3. Place the litter box at the front of the crate up against the door.
 4. Place the food and water opposite the litter box. They should be as far from the litter as possible.
- Cover the back and sides of the crate with a towel or sheet. This will help your cats feel safe in the crate.

****If you are doing the relocation during the hotter months:***

- Leave at least one side of the crate and the front uncovered for better ventilation

****If you are doing the relocation during colder months:***

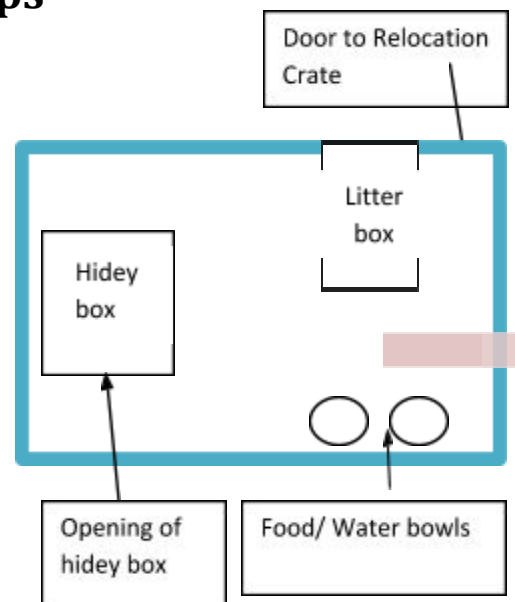


Figure 1



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- Layer a few inches of straw at the bottom of the crate and hidey box over the newspaper or bedding to add warmth

- Use thicker blankets to cover the crate instead of sheets

Transfer Your Cats from Carrier to Crate

1. Open the crate door.
2. Put the carrier inside the crate as far back as possible.
3. Aim the carrier towards the hidey box.
4. Have your body in the opening of the crate door so the cats do not see it as a way to escape.
5. Open the carrier and let the cats exit it. The cats will likely go into the hidey box upon exiting the carrier.
6. With the cats in the hidey box, remove the carrier carefully and close and lock the crate door.

Examples of Relocation Crate Setups





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The Transition Period

This period generally lasts for 2 weeks minimum, though 4 weeks is best. Don't be surprised or concerned if the cats do a lot of hiding; they're very afraid and confused and need time to adjust.

- **Clean the litter box**
 - o At the end of the transition period, you can decide whether you want to keep a litter box for them or not. Many farmers eliminate the box and allow the cats to go to the bathroom wherever they need, as the livestock do. If in a warehouse, keeping the box may be your best bet.

- **Provide fresh food and water daily**
 - o When you go in to feed them, call 'kitty kitty'. This will train your cats to understand that the sound of your voice means food!
 - o Most adult cats need ½ cup of dry food daily. You can feed a small amount of wet or canned food as well. Make sure there is enough food for each cat in the enclosure.

- **Change the bedding when it becomes soiled**

- **Cleaning the enclosure**
 - o Most cats will steer clear of you while you clean the enclosure and will hide.

***Remember: the cats are very scared and confused in the beginning.**

If you let them out of the adjustment space too soon, they **WILL** run away and get lost (or worse). The purpose of the transition period is to help them gain confidence and get used to their new environment.



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Transition Complete: Time to Work!

At the end of the 2-4 week transition period, it's time to let your cats do their job! To let them out, simply leave the door open after morning cleaning or feeding. The cat(s) will exit at their own pace and begin to explore the space.

***It is important to leave the transition enclosure in place and continue feeding nearby, just outside the space.** Many cats will continue to use this enclosure until they feel fully comfortable.

To keep the cats in your territory to focus on your mice, it is important to:

1. Continue giving the cats fresh food and water daily
2. Continue calling to the cats when you feed them so that they stay on a routine

Remember, Mousebusters do a better job at hunting when they are hydrated and not starving!

If they feel like they can't get enough food where they are, they will move on to a new territory.



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Is Your Mousebuster Sick?

Behavioral Signs

- Changes in behavioral routine
- Sitting hunched in one area
- Not leaving an out of the way hidey spot
- Abnormal grooming habits (either more or less)
- Vocalizations
- Changes in litter box usage

Medical Signs

- Abnormal urination or defecation
- Abnormal eating or drinking
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Limping
- Difficulty jumping up on surfaces
- Hair loss
- Discharge from the eyes or nose
- Coughing

*Note: It is common for feral cats to allow additional handling such as medicating, syringe feeding, or cleaning when they are very ill. Do not assume that if a cat allows this that they will be safe to handle in the long run. The cats will go back to their normal 'feral' selves when they feel better

So your Mousebuster is sick... Now what?

Turn to the next page for tips on catching your sick cat!





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Trapping a Working Cat

The easiest (and safest!) way to catch your Mousebuster is by setting up a feral cat trap. These can be purchased online or at feed or hardware stores. Whether you're taking your working cat for yearly vaccines, relocating it to a new working location, or taking it to an emergency vet, it's good to know what to prepare ahead of time.

Teaching your Cats that Traps are OK

1. Place the traps close to where the cats are normally fed.
2. Wire or zip tie the door up securely.
3. Line the trap with newspaper and cover it with a sheet.
4. Start placing their food in the traps at the same time as you would normally feed the cats. Consistency is key. Make sure you do so at a time when you can watch the cats.
5. Ideally, you start 'baiting' the traps (leaving food in them) 3 days before you plan on catching the cat.
6. Place the food on a small paper plate or lightweight plastic dish all the way at the back of the traps. This is to ensure that they have to go all the way into the trap to get the food.

The goal of this process is that the cats learn that it is necessary and safe for them to enter the trap to eat.

Tips & Tricks:

- **Avoid loopholes.** Make sure that there is no way the cats can access the food from outside the traps. Additionally, do not put food anywhere other than in the traps during this process.

Prep the Trap

1. Do not feed the evening before trapping day.



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2. Line the trap with newspaper. 3 sheets of newspaper, folded in thirds, is normally a good amount.
3. Cover the trap with a sheet or long piece of fabric. The trap should be covered completely at all times.

Set the Trap

1. Place the trap in the area that your cats are normally fed.
2. Make sure the trap is placed on even ground where it won't wobble when the cat goes inside.
3. Set the trap a little before feeding time on the day before you would like to have your cat trapped.
4. Place the food at the back of the trap. Make sure it is behind the trip plate, not on it. Only use enough food for a small meal.
5. Open the trap door by pushing the top of the door in and pulling the bottom of the door upward.
6. There should be a small hook attached to one side of the top trap. Hook it onto the tiny metal cylinder on the right side of the door.

(The hook holds the door open while also raising the trip plate. When the cat sets on the trip plate, the hook will release the door and close the trap.)

7. Cover the traps with sheets. Make sure to leave both ends uncovered.

Tips & Tricks:

- Don't leave the traps unattended. This leaves the cat in a vulnerable position and it is likely to get injured.
- Wait quietly in an area where you can see the traps but are out of sight of the cats. Check the trap every 15-30 minutes.
- As soon as the cat is trapped, quickly cover the trap completely and remove it from the area. Use the handle on top of the trap to carry it.
- Once you get the cat in a quiet area, lift the cover to make sure it is the correct cat.

