

Humane Rescue Alliance Community Cat Programs Tip Sheet

Providing Winter Shelter for Community Cats



Cats are clever about adapting to their environment and finding shelter from the elements. Cats love warm places to sleep and will curl up in awkward places and positions. On a cold night, a resourceful cat may cuddle up to your car's warm engine. This is not safe and **should be discouraged** by knocking on the hood of your car before you start it up. Give your community cats a safer option – a kitty cottage.

Kitty cottages - when placed on a deck, under a porch, or nestled in the garden - give cats a warm, dry, safe place to sleep. With many options for materials, they are not expensive to make. HRA often hosts workshops on how to build your own. Deluxe kitty cottages can also be purchased online.

Caregiver Tip: Straw vs. Hay

Choose **straw** as bedding for your kitty cottage. Straw is a by-product of grain production and commonly used for bedding, while hay is a grass grown specifically for food. Straw will provide more cushion and warmth than hay and is less likely to mold. Blankets retain moisture and can freeze.

If it's brown it's straw; it's green it's hay!

DIY Winter Kitty Cottages

You can make your own kitty cottages out of a variety of easy to obtain materials. Your shelter should be waterproof and insulated and large enough for at least one cat to curl up inside when filled with straw.

Whatever material you use, cut a 6 -inch doorway several inches from the bottom of the shelter. Placing it off to the side provides an additional windbreak.

Storage Bin Shelters are sturdy and easy to make. Use at least an 18-gallon solid colored bin. Line it with insulation: pieces of Styrofoam recycled from other packaging and reflective insulation from the home improvement store are two easy-to-work with materials. Don't forget to add insulation under the lid. Secure the insulation with duct tape. Make sure to tape around the doorway to prevent rain from getting between the insulation and the side of the bin.

Straw

Hay



Simple Cooler Cottages

These utilize a large Styrofoam cooler with an entrance way cut in the side. Use duct tape to seal the lid to the base. No additional insulation is needed. Since this is lightweight, you may need to place some bricks on top to prevent it from blowing over.



Community Cats live outside with no specific home or owner

Learn more about how you can help them at

humanerescuealliance.org/catnipp or
contact 202-608-1358 or
catnipp@humanerescuealliance.org

