

## OUTDOOR CAT SHELTER AND FEEDING STATION IDEAS

- In cold weather, shelter is actually more important for stray and feral cats than food.
- Freezing winds, snow and rain can cause frostbite of the ears and paws if colony cats cannot find a dry, wind-proof shelter.
- Even though feral cats build thicker coats for winter, they can quickly succumb to hypothermia, particularly in rain and snow when their fur gets wet and doesn't insulate as well.

**Plastic Tote Shelter** – A shelter anybody can make; suitable for one to two cats.



Start with a 30 gallon tote for one to two cats



Cut 5 1/2" diameter hole in tote



Insert Styrofoam cooler and cut hole in Styrofoam to match tote

After the cats have begun using the tote shelter, you might want to add a door flap made of heavy plastic or heavy vinyl for further wind/weather protection.

If you need to house more cats, just purchase a larger plastic tote.



Add straw



Add Styrofoam lid



Add tote lid—finished!

**Feeding Station**—Protect food from getting wet and spoiled during rain and snow.

Create a small, partially enclosed feeding site to make food and water bowls and the cats themselves less visible.



Rubbermaid storage bin converted into covered feeding station

*PHOTO BY NEIGHBORHOOD CATS*

# ADDITIONAL SHELTER IDEAS

## Cardboard Box Shelter

For a temporary fix, even a cardboard box is better than nothing - tape the top closed and cut out a hole in one side for a door. Tape or secure a piece of plastic or a large trash bag around the box to make it waterproof. Put newspaper on the bottom and, if possible, place the box under something to protect it further from rain—a piece of wood leaned against a fence, under a tree, etc. If possible, raise the box off the ground where it might get wet.

## Styrofoam Cooler Shelter – For one to two cats

An adequate shelter for one to two cats can be made from a simple Styrofoam cooler available at any hardware store. Styrofoam coolers can also be obtained from grocery stores, restaurants, or hospitals and, depending on their size, can house additional cats. The removable lid will allow for easy cleaning.



## Insulation

The cats' shelter will be warmer and cozier if you put loose insulating material inside. The material must be dry and loose, so that the cats can burrow into and underneath it. Straw is the preferred bedding because it does not hold moisture. Do not use blankets, towels or folded newspaper. Because the cats can only lie on top of these materials, they actually draw out body heat and defeat the purpose.

In extreme cold, consider a “Snuggle Safe” micro disc for cats. It is a plastic disk about the size of a Frisbee that can be heated in your microwave for 5 to 7 minutes and stays hot for 12 hours. Wrapped in a cloth the cats can't open, the disk is great for providing warmth inside their shelters. Snuggle Safe is available through Petsmart (Item No. 451284, \$19.99). Order online at [www.petsmart.com](http://www.petsmart.com) or check your local Petsmart store to see if they have them in stock.



**Feral Villa – Cat Shelter**  
Available only online  
at [www.feralvilla.com](http://www.feralvilla.com)

## Placement of Shelters

Cat shelters should be placed in an inconspicuous area on your property, away from people or high traffic. Shelters and feeding stations should be placed so that cats do not cross roads or neighbor's property to move back and forth from shelter to food/water. Provide enough shelters to house all the cats in the colony.

For more shelter ideas, visit our website [www.indyferal.org](http://www.indyferal.org)  
(317) 596-2300      [contact@indyferal.org](mailto:contact@indyferal.org)