

FACT SHEET



YOU AND YOUR CAT

Cats make great pets and companions for families, children and elderly people. However, owning a cat is a big responsibility. Even though they are independent animals they still need to be cared for in a similar way to dogs.

As a cat owner it is your responsibility to care for your cat by providing adequate shelter, food and water and ensuring your cat does not pose a nuisance to neighbours or a threat to wildlife and the environment.

Do I need to register my cat?

Currently cats are not required to be registered in South Australia, as outlined in the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995. However, all cats must be microchipped by 1 July 2018. After this date, all cats must be microchipped:

- By three (3) months of age; or
- Within twenty eight (28) days of the owner taking possession; or
- At the end of an extension period.

Limits of cats per household

Council has a By-Law which limits the number of cats per premise to two (2). However, in certain circumstances, Council may give written permission to a person to keep more than two cats on their premises.

Identification of cats

It is required for all cats to be identified by either a collar which is marked with the current address or phone number of the owner; or implanted with a microchip which contains information that could be used to locate the owner. If your cat is identified and found roaming outside its property, it will be protected by the law. If you choose not to identify your cat and allow it to roam, you run the risk of your cat being collected and disposed of as an un-owned cat.

Desexing your cat

From 1 July 2018 all cats must be desexed by six (6) months of age, or twenty eight (28) days of acquirement. The new laws will not apply to cats owned before 1 July 2018. Mandatory desexing is being introduced to cut down on the number of unwanted litters being abandoned and euthanized in pounds and shelters. Cats have the ability to reproduce from as young as four to five months old. There are many health and behavioural advantages of having your cat desexed at an early age, including:

- Reducing the likelihood of it roaming from your property;
- Reducing the unwanted spraying of urine to mark territories;
- Reducing the risk of some cancers;
- Preventing unwanted pregnancies, which may add to the growing problem of homeless or unwanted cats.

Curfews for Cats

Despite there being no legal curfews for cats, Council encourages owners to confine their cats to their property from sunset to sunrise. The benefits of keeping your cat confined from sunset to sunrise include:

- Reducing the risk of your cat being involved in an accident;
- Reducing the likelihood of your cat being involved in a fight with another animal, which may result in expensive veterinary treatment or your cat contracting a disease such as Feline AIDS (FIV- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus)
- Reducing injury to native wildlife

It is known that cats kept inside at night live at least three years longer, on average, than cats who are allowed to roam at night.

Problem Cats

If you encounter a problem cat in your neighborhood, you should speak to the cat's owner about the impact their cat is having on your property and environment. Council is committed to ensuring nuisance cats are kept to a minimum and will actively promote the use of cat traps by residents experiencing problems with cats. To report any problems, contact Council's General Inspector on (08) 8768 2003.

Tips for responsible cat owners

- Identify your cat so it won't get lost or be destroyed
- Confine your cat from sunset to sunrise
- Desex your cat before it reaches sexual maturity (generally from four to five months)
- Vaccinate your cat
- Check your cat regularly for fleas
- Interact with your cat on a daily basis
- Provide environmental enrichment. This may include scratching poles, toys, bedding and plenty of human interaction
- Ensure your cat has an appropriate place to go to the toilet

For any further information on this matter visit <http://goodcatsa.com/> or to report a stray or problem cat, contact the Council Office on (08) 8768 2003.