

Helping your cat feel comfortable in their carrier

The journey to the donation session can sometimes be the most stressful part for cats as many associate their carriers with unfamiliar places or medical procedures. Setting your cat up for a successful donation starts with getting them familiar and comfortable with travelling in their carrier. With consistent, positive experiences at home, you can help your cat learn that their carrier is a safe, predictable, and rewarding space. This means when you bring them to donate, they are already used to going in their carrier and arrive at the session feeling calm and ready to start lifesaving.

Choosing the right carrier



Entry and exit

Choose a carrier with both top and front openings or a wide, easy-entry design. This makes it easier to get your cat in and out, especially for cats who are not yet trained to enter voluntarily.



Easy to take apart

A carrier that separates into a top and bottom is ideal. It allows our donation team to examine or handle your cat while they remain in the familiar bottom half, helping reduce stress and make your cat feel safe.



Size matters

Your cat should be able to stand, turn around, and reposition comfortably. A carrier that is too small increases stress, while one that is too large may make them feel less secure.



Privacy, ventilation, and visual support

Good airflow is essential. Placing a light cloth or towel over the carrier can reduce visual stimulation and help your cat feel more secure while maintaining ventilation. Using a synthetic feline pheromone can also support a low stress experience by creating a familiar and comforting scent.

Tips for helping your cat feel comfortable in their carrier

Leave the carrier out daily

Place the carrier in an area where your cat already chooses to rest. For many cats, this is near where their owners spend most of the time. When the carrier is part of everyday life, it stops signalling 'something is happening' and becomes just another resting place for your cat to enjoy.

Tip: If your cat is fearful, start smaller by only using the bottom half of the carrier and gradually add the top and door as confidence builds

Make it worth exploring

Place treats, toys, or catnip inside the carrier to encourage your cat to explore the space. This builds positive associations and can help your cat feel calmer during future travel.

Make it comfortable and add a familiar scent

Put some of your cat's favourite bedding or blankets inside. Familiar scent is one of the most powerful calming tools for cats and helps to support their emotional regulation both at home and when they come to the donation session.

Reward voluntary entry and never force the process

Whenever your cat chooses to enter the carrier on their own, immediately reward them with a favourite treat or verbal praise. Avoid pushing, placing, or chasing your cat into the carrier as this will increase fear and avoidance, making future travel and donation visits more stressful. The key is working with your cat to help them take control, choose to go into their carrier, and feel happy and comfortable in there.

Tips for travelling with your cat

Before you travel

Know the location of the donation venue, including your appointment time. Plan a smooth driving route, and allow time to check for travel updates and delays.

Tip: Take your cat on short car journeys to help them become familiar with travelling in the car.

Create a calming car environment

Use a synthetic feline pheromone spray in the carrier and car 10-15 minutes before travel to help your cat feel safe. Adjust the car to a comfortable temperature before placing your cat inside, and play soft classical music or cat-specific calming sounds, including purring audio. Stay calm and speak softly, avoid 'shh' sounds, which can resemble hissing to cats and cause them to feel stressed.

Carrier handling matters

Always support the carrier from the bottom with one side resting against your body for stability. Avoid swinging the carrier or carrying it with the handle to keep it as steady as possible to reduce stress for your cat. Secure the carrier by placing it in the footwell or on a seat with a seat belt attached. Use a towel or padding to keep the carrier level, prevent sliding, and absorb any accidents. Cover the carrier with a light cloth to reduce visual stimulation while maintaining ventilation.