CLINIC POLICIES FOR SURGICAL SERVICES

Updated 7/31/2017

Thank you for contacting the Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Project. We hope to help improve the lives of the felines in your life.

The services we provide are intended to:

- Reduce the number of free-roaming and unowned stray or abandoned cats.
- Reduce the impact of free-roaming cats on the environment.
- Improve the quality of life of free-roaming cats.
- Reduce the number of cats placed in and euthanized in area shelters.
- Increase the chances for shelter cats to be placed in homes.

All policies are in place to ensure the greatest safety for the cats while they are in our care.

Please read the following information carefully. ***You must agree with and accept all of the clinic policies before bringing a cat for surgery.*** Our policies are intended to put the cats' needs and best interests first.

If, for any reason, any of these policies obstruct a person's ability to access our services, we encourage that person to speak with FCSNP staff. We may be able to make arrangements or provide further resources, in order to serve as many cats as possible.

Ear-Tipping

Ear-tipping is highly recommended for all cats living a free-roaming lifestyle such as any community cat, cat living in a colony, or a barn cat, for example. Ear-tipping is not usually recommended for house cats that may have outdoor time during the day, but come in at night. Cats that are appropriate to ear-tip, qualify for surgery and a rabies vaccine at no charge to the trapper or caretaker. Rabies is only administered cats weighing over 3 pounds or that appear to be over 3 months old.

Ear-tipping is an easily and universally identifiable indicator that a free-roaming or feral cat has been surgically sterilized. The procedure is safe and humane, and only performed while the cats are under anesthesia for their spay or neuter surgery. One centimeter is removed from the tip of an adult cat's ear. Kittens are ear-tipped proportionally less for their size. The purpose of ear-tipping is to visibly identify an altered free-roaming cat to avoid future transport, stress and anesthesia.

No-Ear-Tips

As part of our Feral Cat Prevention Program, cats for which an ear-tip is not appropriate (pet cats) who belong to families or individuals of low-income status can be spayed and neutered at our clinic for a small fee. These cats do not receive ear-tips but instead a small tattoo on the abdomen (belly) to indicate they're spayed or neutered. After the hair regrows, the tattoo is only visible if the belly is shaved. This protects cats from unnecessary surgeries if lost or separated from their human families in the future. The fee for a neuter (male sterilization surgery) is $15. The fee for a spay (female sterilization surgery) is $25.

Surgery Surcharges

We may charge a small additional fee in the case that a cat is cryptorchid (one or more undescended testicles), has pyometra (uterine infection), or has a hernia that must be repaired for appropriate closure of a spay surgery. These surcharges range from $10-$15. If a cat is anesthetized but is found to have already been spayed or neutered, a $15 fee is charged instead of the surgery fee. This is to cover the cost of anesthesia. These surcharges do not apply for ear-tip cats.
If any of these fees are applied to a cat and the owner/caretaker is unable to afford them, we will gladly work with that owner/caretaker so the cat may receive necessary surgery.

Appropriate Carriers

We accept either tame/pet cats or free roaming/feral-behaving cats in carriers or traps. If bringing a cat in a carrier: small, sturdy plastic carriers with front opening doors are required. Large dog carriers are not accepted due to safety concerns. Only one cat per carrier is allowed. We allow litters of small, tame kittens in one carrier before surgery, as long as separate empty carriers are provided for recovery. Cardboard carriers/boxes or any other non-cat carrier containers are not accepted.

If you need help getting an appropriate carrier please contact FCSNP and we will gladly help you

Minimum Weight

Two pounds is the minimum weight for surgery. This weight is usually reached around 8 weeks of age, if the kitten has had a generally healthy upbringing. Kittens weighing less than two pounds will be returned without being sedated or altered, for their safety.

Microchipped Cats

All cats are scanned for microchips. If a registered microchip is found, no further services are performed unless we receive permission directly from the registrant while it is still timely for the cat to receive services. We will attempt to contact the chip

company and facilitate putting the person who brought the cat in in contact with the registrant.

If you are bringing a found cat (a pet cat that you have found roaming free and have decided to help or adopt) in for surgery with us, please take that cat into a veterinary clinic or shelter to have it scanned for a microchip and to have its spay/neuter status checked first. This will let you know if that cat already has a home and may save that cat an unnecessary surgery or anesthesia.

Additional Services

Additional services are available for small fees, for all cats, *at the time of spay/neuter surgery only*. These services must be requested prior to surgery by the owner/agent or caretaker. As a non-profit spay and neuter organization, the only services we offer are: Rabies vaccine, FVRCP vaccine (commonly called "distemper" vaccine), microchipping, blood sample draw, tapeworm treatment and a one-time topical flea treatment. We are not able to provide any blood testing, follow-up treatments, or booster shots for these services.

Blood Draw Option

We can draw a blood sample for the caretaker or owner while the cat is anesthetized, so that the caretaker/agent/owner may test that sample with their regular veterinarian. We do not provide test kits or perform onsite testing for feline leukemia (FeLV) or feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV.) or any other blood testing. Because the accuracy of these tests is widely variable and can be affected by numerous factors, we strongly recommend consultation with a veterinarian concerning testing and results, before choosing this service. This service costs a small fee.

Microchipping

We offer microchipping for a small fee. This option includes a microchip, implantation of the chip, and initial registration to the manufacturing company's database is also included. By choosing the "FCSNP Provided Microchip" option, the owner/caretaker/agent is agreeing to the release of his or her information to the microchip company. Additionally, they agree to follow-up with the microchip company directly for any additional registration needs, changes, or updates after initial registration.

If the owner/agent provides FCSNP with a microchip for implantation, FCSNP will perform implantation only (no registration is provided with this service) at the time of surgery for a small fee.

Medical Issues, Treatments and Diagnostics

We do not provide veterinary care other than spay/neuter. Medical issues observed by the staff are noted on the Medical Record and the information is passed on to the owner or caretaker. Minor problems such as fight wounds may be treated, for ear-tip cats and at the time of surgery only. We do not dispense or prescribe medications. If further care is warranted, we will recommend that the owner or caretaker follow-up with their regular veterinarian.

Medical Record and Surgical Release Forms

If asked to fill out a hard copy of the Medical Record, this form must be completed legibly and in its entirety. Incomplete or illegible paperwork will result in refusal of services and cats being returned without any surgical or other services performed. All owners/caretakers/agents must read and sign the Surgical Release form. We will not proceed with any surgical services, anesthesia or additional services without a signed Surgical Release form. Please read this documents thoroughly.

Late Policy

Check in occurs between 7-8am. Every client is asked to be here before 7:30am, in order to facilitate a smooth check in process for all. At Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Project (FCSNP), we ask everyone who uses this clinic to please respect the timeline of each day. We do understand that being late is sometimes unavoidable however, it is always safer for the cats when every cat is admitted before our surgical start time. If at any point it is determined by FCSNP staff that it is unsafe to admit a cat or group of cats, no admittance will be granted. In order to safely accommodate cats whose owner/caretaker/agent is running late, we use specific criteria to determine if a late cat will be admitted. Adherence to criteria will be assessed by and acceptance of late cats will be at the discretion of the Clinic Manager.

Standby

Each clinic holds 10 standby slots for surgeries. These are intended for Ear Tip cats so trappers may avoid cats staying in traps any longer than necessary. These slots may be used by non ear tip cats however, ET's will always get priority.

Surgical Priority

If we cannot complete surgeries for all admitted cats on any given day, we bump cats to another day based on specific criteria. These criteria are subjective and are individualized at each clinic. The Clinic Manager has full liberty to allocate surgeries according to these guidelines by taking all factors into account.

- All ear-tip surgeries receive priority over no-ear-tip surgeries. This includes standby ear-tip cats having priority over no-ear-tip cats with reservations.
- Age, health, pregnancy status, total # of cats brought by caretaker and distance traveled by the caretaker are all considered.

Right to Refuse Services

We reserve the right to refuse future services to any person who engages in any inappropriate treatment of staff, volunteers, property or cats, or for refusal to abide by any and all FCSNP policies.

Traps

Metal traps are accepted and preferred for feral-behaving cats. Two cats are allowed in a trap prior to surgery, but we require separate carriers/traps for recovery. This is for the cats' safety. Trap rental is available, please inquire with FCSNP staff.

Euthanasia for Ear-Tip Cats

Only free-roaming cats presented for ear-tip surgeries are considered for euthanasia due to health reasons. If the examining veterinarian believes an ET cat is suffering, determines that a cat is in very poor health, or believes that it is inhumane to return the cat to a free-roaming lifestyle, we will attempt to contact the agent listed on the Medical Record to discuss euthanasia. However, so that we may proceed in a timely and humane fashion for a cat in an urgent situation, we reserve the right to humanely euthanize ill or suffering free-roaming (ET) cats without contacting the caretaker/agent listed first. We strive to make accurate and humane assessments, but choices are not always clear. If we have questions or need further information to assist in making a decision, we will call the contact/agent listed on the Medical Record.

Outside of spay/neuter, we do provide humane euthanasia for sick or suffering, feral, un-owned cats on a case-by-case basis as approved by a FCSNP Staff Veterinarian. If you have or know of a sick or suffering free-roaming cat that needs to be euthanized for humane reasons, we provide that service for free.

We do not euthanize any cat that appears to be in good health.

Cats presented for no-ear-tip surgeries are never euthanized without request by or permission directly from the owner/agent, and only then in extenuating circumstances where the animal is suffering.

All cats are scanned for a microchip prior to humane euthanasia.

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