



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Operating Policy and Procedure

**OP 61.17: Texas Tech University Feral Cat Colony**

**DATE:** December 1, 2021

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish guidelines for the successful control and management of the Texas Tech University (TTU) feral cat colony.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed in October of odd-numbered years by the Associate Vice President for Research and Integrity, the Texas Tech University Chief of Police, the Associate Vice President for Operations, and the Tech Feral Cat Coalition (TFCC) leadership with substantive revisions forwarded to the Senior Vice President for Administration & Finance and Chief Financial Officer.

**POLICY/PROCEDURE**

**1. General Purpose**

The intent of this policy is to outline and establish guidelines for the successful control and management of the TTU feral cat colony. A committee of campus delegates will oversee the management of the colony.

Feral cat colonies are found in most communities worldwide, and this includes the TTU campus. This OP establishes the university's plan to manage, control, and sustain a healthy, non-threatening, co-habitation of the feral cat population and the campus community.

The purpose of the Tech Feral Cat Coalition (TFCC) is to reduce and stabilize the feral cat population through Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR) programs. TNR is the most effective and humane method for managing and controlling feral cat populations. Well-maintained feral cat colonies serve the TTU community by providing natural rodent and pest control. Stabilized feral cat programs also benefit the Lubbock community's animal welfare resources, saving taxpayer dollars by reducing the number of cats and kittens in the city shelter.

**2. Committee Appointment and Composition**

The Feral Cat Management Committee (FCMC) will be comprised of 5-6 members. The Associate Vice President for Operations (AVPO) will chair the committee. The AVPO will appoint one delegate from the TTU community, the Lubbock community, the TTU student body, the Assistant Vice President for Environmental Health & Safety (AVPEHS), and, if deemed necessary, the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. The current President of the TFCC will sit on the committee with up to two co-sponsors of record.

### 3. Committee Operations

- a. The AVPO will set a meeting each semester (fall, spring, and summer) to review the status, needs, and requirements of the TTU campus, campus community, and the feral cat population.
- b. All communications with any individuals or groups regarding the feral cat colony, including the TFCC, the Lubbock community, or any other entity, will be through the TFCC.
- c. If eligible, the TTU feral cat community will be registered as feral cat colonies with Lubbock Animal Services. A copy of record must be filed with the AVPO and AVPEHS.
- d. The TFCC must be a registered TTU Student Government Association organization.

### 4. Feeding Stations (see Attachment)

- a. All feeding stations (the station itself and the locations) must be approved by the FCMC and will be the responsibility of the TFCC. Approved feeding station areas include the following locations:
  - (1) Administrative Support Center
  - (2) Architecture building
  - (3) Art building
  - (4) Civil Engineering building
  - (5) Electrical Engineering building
  - (6) English & Philosophy building
  - (7) Grantham building
  - (8) Hance Chapel
  - (9) Housing Services building
  - (10) Kinesiology and Sport Management building
  - (11) Mechanical Engineering building
  - (12) Petroleum Engineering building
  - (13) Physical Plant Welding Services
  - (14) TTU Rawls Golf Course
  - (15) West Hall
- b. All stations must have a sign (provided at no charge by the TTU Operations Division) securely attached to the station designating it as an approved TTU feral cat feeding station.
- c. All stations must be kept clean, presentable, and covered; provide access for the cats; and be replaced when broken or showing signs of normal wear and tear (e.g., faded color, broken lid or base, cracked/split cover).
- d. Procedures for feeding stations located in non-approved areas:
  - (1) The TFCC President and co-sponsors of record will be notified and will pick up any unapproved feeding stations within a reasonable time period.
  - (2) If the unapproved feeding station is not picked up within a reasonable time period, the Operations Division will pick up and remove the feeding station.

- e. Any form of food placed on the ground or within ground cover or left in any other areas not allowed by this policy will be confiscated and removed.
- f. Feeding stations are allowed only in the FCMC-approved locations.
- g. Feeding stations will not be allowed within 100 feet of the following locations:
  - (1) Animal and Food Sciences
  - (2) The Burkhart Center
  - (3) Child Development Research Center
  - (4) Human Sciences Cottage
  - (5) Residence and/or dining hall(s)
  - (6) Student Union Building
  - (7) Any location routinely frequented by children, areas under USDA regulations, or any area in which accreditation status could be affected by the presence of cats (e.g., near Animal and Food Sciences).

**5. Winter Shelters (see Attachment)**

- a. Winter shelters may be provided only during the winter months and within FCMC-approved locations. Approved winter shelter areas are at the following locations:
  - (1) Administrative Support Center
  - (2) Architecture building
  - (3) Art building
  - (4) Civil Engineering building
  - (5) Electrical Engineering building
  - (6) English & Philosophy building
  - (7) Grantham building
  - (8) Hance Chapel
  - (9) Housing Services building
  - (10) Kinesiology and Sport Management building
  - (11) Mechanical Engineering building
  - (12) Petroleum Engineering building
  - (13) Physical Plant Welding Services
  - (14) TTU Rawls Golf Course
  - (15) West Hall
- b. Shelters must be kept clean, presentable, and covered; provide access for the cats; and be replaced when broken or showing signs of normal wear and tear (e.g., faded color, broken lid or base, cracked/split cover).
- c. Procedures for winter shelters located in non-approved areas:
  - (1) The TFCC President and co-sponsors of record will be notified and will pick up any unapproved shelters within a reasonable time period.
  - (2) If the unapproved winter shelter is not picked up within a reasonable time period, the Operations Division will pick up and remove the shelter.

- d. All shelters must have a sign (provided at no charge by the Texas Tech University Operations Division) securely attached to the station designating it is an approved TTU feral cat winter shelter.
  - e. Any other form of shelter materials placed on the ground or within ground cover or left in any other areas not allowed by this policy will be confiscated and removed.
6. Feeding stations or winter shelters provided by students, staff, or faculty that have not been approved or coordinated through FCMC are prohibited. It will be the responsibility of the TFCC, to the best of its ability, to encourage those individuals to follow the provisions of this OP. If any individual does not follow the provisions of this OP, TTU may act to enforce these provisions to the extent allowed by the TTU operating policies.

## 7. Safety and Care of TTU Feral Cats

- a. TTU campus cats are protected by Texas Animal Cruelty Laws. Abandoning or dumping a cat on campus is illegal. Animal abandonment and animal cruelty violate the [Texas State Penal Code §42.092](#); in this section, the term “animal” is defined as “a domesticated living creature, including any stray or feral cat.” Any form of cruel treatment to the TTU campus cats is explicitly prohibited by Texas criminal laws and TTU operating policies. Animal cruelty offenses will be dealt with to the extent allowable by the Texas state law and the TTU operating policies. Texas laws define animal cruelty to include intentional cruelty and failure to act. Cruel treatment includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - (1) Torturing an animal;
  - (2) Injuring, poisoning, or killing an animal;
  - (3) Abandoning or dumping an animal; and
  - (4) Failing to provide shelter, food, or care for an animal.
- b. For the safety of the cats and the university community, chasing, harassing, provoking, or attempting to handle a campus cat by unauthorized individuals is strictly prohibited. Violations will be dealt with to the extent allowable by the Texas state law and the TTU operating policies.
- c. For the safety of the cats and the university community, any tampering, vandalism, or destruction of approved feeding stations, winter shelters, humane traps, trapping supplies (e.g., trap signage, trap covers, food, food bowls), or any other university property is strictly prohibited. Violations will be dealt with to the extent allowable by the Texas state law and the TTU operating policies.
- d. For the safety of the cats and the university community, cats are not allowed within, under, or on top of TTU buildings. This includes mechanical rooms, the tunnel system, crawl spaces, cellars, basements, or attics. If a cat(s) is identified within a prohibited area, it is the responsibility of the TFCC leadership or one of the TFCC co-sponsors to coordinate with the Operations Division to trap and relocate any identified cat(s). Upon being contacted by the Operations Division, the TFCC leadership will attempt to trap the cats within a reasonable time period. The TFCC will communicate frequently with the Operations Division regarding the status of the TFCC’s trapping efforts and will coordinate with the Operations Division in the event that additional assistance is needed in order to humanely and safely trap the animals.

- e. For the safety of the cats and the university community, it is the responsibility of the Operations Division to contact the TFCC immediately and provide advance notice in the event that any hole(s) cats or other animals could potentially occupy is to be filled with dirt, concrete, or other substrate on campus. Operations will notify the TFCC of these plans and allow ample time for TFCC leadership to trap all animals humanely and safely in the area prior to backfilling. Once the TFCC trapping process has been completed, the TFCC will provide the Operations Division with approval to proceed with scheduling a date and time for backfilling. Prior to backfilling, the Operations Division and/or at least one member of the TFCC leadership team will conduct a thorough inspection of the hole(s) with the use of a scope camera to ensure that no live animals remain inside the hole(s). The TFCC may choose to be present during the scope camera inspection or may choose to provide the Operations Division with approval to proceed with the inspection without the presence of a TFCC member on site. After completion of the scope camera inspection, if and when the TFCC and the Operations Division are confident to the best of their abilities that no live animals remain inside the hole(s), the Operations Division will proceed with the backfilling process.
- f. It is the goal of the TFCC and TTU to trap, spay or neuter, vaccinate, and apply topical (veterinarian-approved) prescription flea treatment to all feral cats on campus. Any cat showing signs of nursing or taking care of a litter may be excluded from this requirement.
- g. It is the responsibility of the TFCC to maintain accurate information on the feral cat community to include, but not be limited to, the total number of animals, their locations, and the number and identity of spayed, neutered, and vaccinated cats. This information must be provided to the Associate Vice President for Operations and the Assistant Vice President for Environmental Health & Safety in September, December, and May of each year. In support of this requirement, the Operations Division will purchase, maintain, and loan wildlife cameras to the TFCC. These cameras will be used for the sole purpose of monitoring the feral cat community and their activities.
- h. It is the responsibility of the TFCC to trap, spay/neuter, eartip, vaccinate, and apply topical (veterinarian-approved) prescription flea treatment to any cats found on campus without eartips. The TFCC will either place those animals for adoption if they are tame/socialized or return them to an approved habitat on campus. This information (picture and vet record) must be filed with the Associate Vice President for Operations and the Assistant Vice President for Environmental Health & Safety in September, December, and May of each year.
- i. The TFCC will be responsible for trapping and placing for adoption any and all tame/socialized cats and kittens found on campus.
- j. In the event of a situation involving a cat that is an immediate threat to the TTU community (e.g., has caused serious physical harm to an individual without provocation), the Operations Division and/or the Texas Tech Police Department will contact the TFCC immediately, and the TFCC will immediately intercede to capture and remove the cat from the premises safely and humanely. The Operations Division, the Texas Tech Police Department, and the TFCC have the responsibility to the feral cat and campus community to act within the confines of the Texas state law to control the situation. In addition, the Operations Division will work with Lubbock Animal Control Services to carry out rabies testing if necessary.

- k. TTU, the TFCC, and the Operations Division will in all instances act humanely, professionally, and ethically when performing any duties related to the campus feral cat community and will in all instances act within the confines of [Texas State Law Penal Code §42.092](#).

*Attachment: TTU-Approved Feral Cat Feeding/Winter Stations*