

Independent Cat Society

PO Box 735 Westville, IN 46391 (219) 785-4936

Volunteer Manual

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Welcome to the Independent Cat Society!

Thank you for your interest in the Independent Cat Society. Although we have a part-time, paid animal care staff, the Independent Cat Society operates mainly through volunteers. We appreciate the donation of your time, and we're pleased to have you join us.

Please honestly and carefully consider the amount of time you are able to commit to the shelter. We would prefer that you underestimate and add more time later than become overwhelmed by a hectic schedule and disappoint the cats.

In general, we ask that volunteers commit a minimum of six hours per month. However, that requirement varies based on the program in which you are involved. Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age for all programs except Playtime (ages 10-15 with parental supervision). All volunteers will participate in an orientation specific to their designated job.

Because different volunteers work at the shelter daily, good communication is important for the shelter's smooth operation. If you have non-emergency information to communicate, record a note in the Adoption Counselor's notebook on the desk. If you're at the shelter and see a cat with a health problem or other emergency, please alert the medicator or the adoption volunteer on duty, or call a member of the **Health and Wellness (formerly Cat Care) Committee**.

The **Volunteer Coordinator**, who reports to the Board of Directors, oversees activities of volunteers.

We sincerely hope that your volunteer experience at the Independent Cat Society is rewarding!

How can I volunteer?

You may choose to volunteer in one, or more, of several areas:

Socializing. If you'd rather talk to cats than to people, this is the job for you! Our cats need loving interaction with people. When our volunteers sit with them, and just pet them and talk to them, the cats become more comfortable with people and improve their chances for adoption.

Playtime. Do you enjoy watching cats run and leap? They all need a chance to play and exercise. Balls, furry mice, laser lights and other toys are available at the shelter for your play dates!

Grooming. Have you always dreamed of being a hairdresser? Promoting good health through regular brushing and combing is important. We have a variety of brushes and combs, which we ask that you disinfect after each use.

Cleaning. You'll never get bored at the shelter if you like to clean! If this is your cup of tea, we have lots for you to do. Litter boxes, plastic hoods, room furniture, Plexiglas between rooms, windows and floors always need to be cleaned, and laundry always needs to be washed and folded.

Transportation. Our vet transporters drive cats to their daytime veterinary appointments. Many volunteers like the flexibility of this volunteer task and find it a very rewarding experience.

Medications and Feeding. Many of our cats receive medications and supplements twice a day. If you are interested in learning to give medications or vaccinations, please contact a member of the Health and Wellness Committee to arrange training.

Fundraising. Do you enjoy meeting people? We always need volunteers to help organize fundraising events, make crafts, bake for events, or distribute flyers for events.

Foster Care. If you have a spare bedroom or bathroom, a quiet home, transportation, and lots of love to give, Foster Care might be for you. It is a richly rewarding experience, and good homes are always needed.

Adoption Counselor. The shelter is open Saturdays and Sundays for adoptions. Adoption counselors interview adoption applicants to ensure our cats are placed in safe, responsible and loving homes.

Adoption Counselor Assistant. Assistants provide assistance to potential adopters, provide information about individual cats and answer phones.

Maintenance and Yard Work. This job is great for the handyman or handywoman. Maintaining the building and grounds includes mowing, trimming hedges, pulling weeds, and gardening. Professional electrical, construction and plumbing help is also needed.

Telephone Calls. Can't make it to the shelter? Volunteer from home by calling bakers and crafters or making adoption follow up calls.

Room Mom. Pick your favorite room full of kitties and become their mom, visit twice a month, groom, check general health, clean ears, clip nails and play!

Volunteer Guidelines

Before volunteering, all volunteers will complete and sign a volunteer application and attend a Volunteer Orientation. All volunteers sign a waiver on the volunteer application, stating that the Independent Cat Society is not responsible for volunteer injuries.

Independent Cat Society volunteers are responsible and respectful of shelter policies. If you would like to see a copy of the Independent Cat Society's policies, please talk to a member of the Board of Directors.

If you have any questions about the Volunteer Guidelines listed below, please speak with a Board member or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteer Log

Each time you volunteer, record your name, date, and time in/time out on the Volunteer Log on the desk. We track volunteer hours, as this information is used for grant funding.

Cat Care/Adoptions

- 1 Talk with a member of the Health and Wellness Committee before clipping nails or fur, cleaning ears, or bathing the cats. Feeding snacks or "people" food to the cats is generally prohibited. Without the authorization or approval from a Health and Wellness Committee member or from the Cat Care Manager, you should NOT engage in these activities under any circumstances, for your own safety and for the safety of the cats.
- 2 Before letting a cat out of a cage, talk to a member of the Health and Wellness Committee. Again, for yours and the cat's safety, do not open cages unless under the authorization of the Health and Wellness Committee or Cat Care Manager.
- 3 Do not write on or tamper with the Cat History binders, forms, or any other Independent Cat Society property.
- 4 Use the Cat Care notebook to record a note about a cat's medical condition.

- 5 If you are an adoption volunteer and you can't work your scheduled adoption day, arrange for another adoption volunteer to take your place.

Health, Safety and Security

- 1 When the shelter is closed to the public keep the doors locked at all times. Do not open the door if someone knocks. Tell them through the door that we are not open to the public and that we will be open Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- 2 Do not answer the phone when the shelter is not open, unless the ring is the signal. Ask the Volunteer Coordinator how to identify the signal.
- 3 If you are given a key to the shelter, you will sign an affidavit stating that you will not make copies of any keys or communicate the alarm code information to anyone. All keys are the property of the Independent Cat Society. A volunteer must surrender all keys upon termination of his or her volunteer position, or be charged a fee no less than \$25 per key.
- 4 We encourage volunteers to have a current tetanus shot before working at the shelter. The Independent Cat Society is not responsible for injuries or illnesses incurred at the shelter or in foster homes.

Volunteer Behavior & Independent Cat Society policy

- 1 Anyone who works at the shelter or for the shelter offsite, and is not an employee, is a volunteer.
- 2 All volunteers and PACT workers must complete an application and sign a liability waiver before working at the shelter or in foster care.
- 3 Because we must keep the telephone line open for shelter business, we ask you not make personal calls at the shelter unless it is an emergency.
- 4 When answering the phone during business hours, please say, "Independent Cat Society – how may I help you?"
- 5 Volunteers are not authorized to accept any cat (except a returned Independent Cat Society cat) unless the Admissions Committee has authorized and prearranged the cat's admission to the shelter. The Admissions Committee will let you know of any such arrangement.
- 6 The Independent Cat Society does not tolerate drug and/or alcohol abuse by volunteers. For the safety of the animals, volunteers who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol will permanently lose their volunteer status. Likewise, if a volunteer mistreats shelter cats in any way, he/she will permanently lose their volunteer status.
- 7 Shouting, swearing or yelling are not allowed inside the shelter or on shelter property.
- 8 Minor children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. We are not responsible for injuries or illnesses to minor children in a volunteer's care.
- 9 You must adhere to all other shelter policies at all times. Please consult the policy manuals available in the shelter, including this one.

About the Independent Cat Society

A Commitment for Life

The Independent Cat Society is a non-profit, no-kill cat shelter. We spay and neuter and try to find adoptive homes for the homeless cats and kittens we rescue.

Founded in 1977, the Independent Cat Society operates through the generosity of more than 100 volunteers and thousands of supporters, from our local communities, and across the United States.

The mission of the Independent Cat Society and its no-kill shelter is to promote the welfare of all animals, especially cats, by helping to:

- 1 Reduce pet overpopulation
- 2 Educate the public
- 3 Prevent cruelties to animals
- 4 Promote responsible pet ownership
- 5 Work for more humane legislation

Our no-kill policy means we do not euthanize a cat unless a veterinarian advises it to relieve pain and suffering.

A strict spay/neuter program, comprehensive veterinary care and unconditional love from Independent Cat Society volunteers and staff transform frightened strays into healthy, loving pets and companions.

The Independent Cat Society does not receive financial support from city, county, state or federal agencies. To care for the shelter's cats and kittens, the Independent Cat Society relies solely on donations from members and friends, adoption fees, fundraising events, membership dues and sales from volunteer-made cat crafts and toys.

The Independent Cat Society is at Rt. 6 and the LaPorte/Porter County Line Road, in Westville, Indiana. The shelter is open to the public and for adoptions Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., or by appointment by calling (219) 785-4936.

Board of Directors

A nine-member Board of Directors governs the Independent Cat Society. Board members hold two-year, volunteer positions, and elections are held in November each year. The Board meets the first Monday of every month. Please contact the society for the meeting location and time if you are interested in attending.

Board Committees

The Independent Cat Society bylaws provide for several committees to help the board operate the shelter. These include Standing Committees and Special Committees. The Board of Directors is responsible for the activities of both types of committees.

Standing committees are specified in the bylaws, and include:

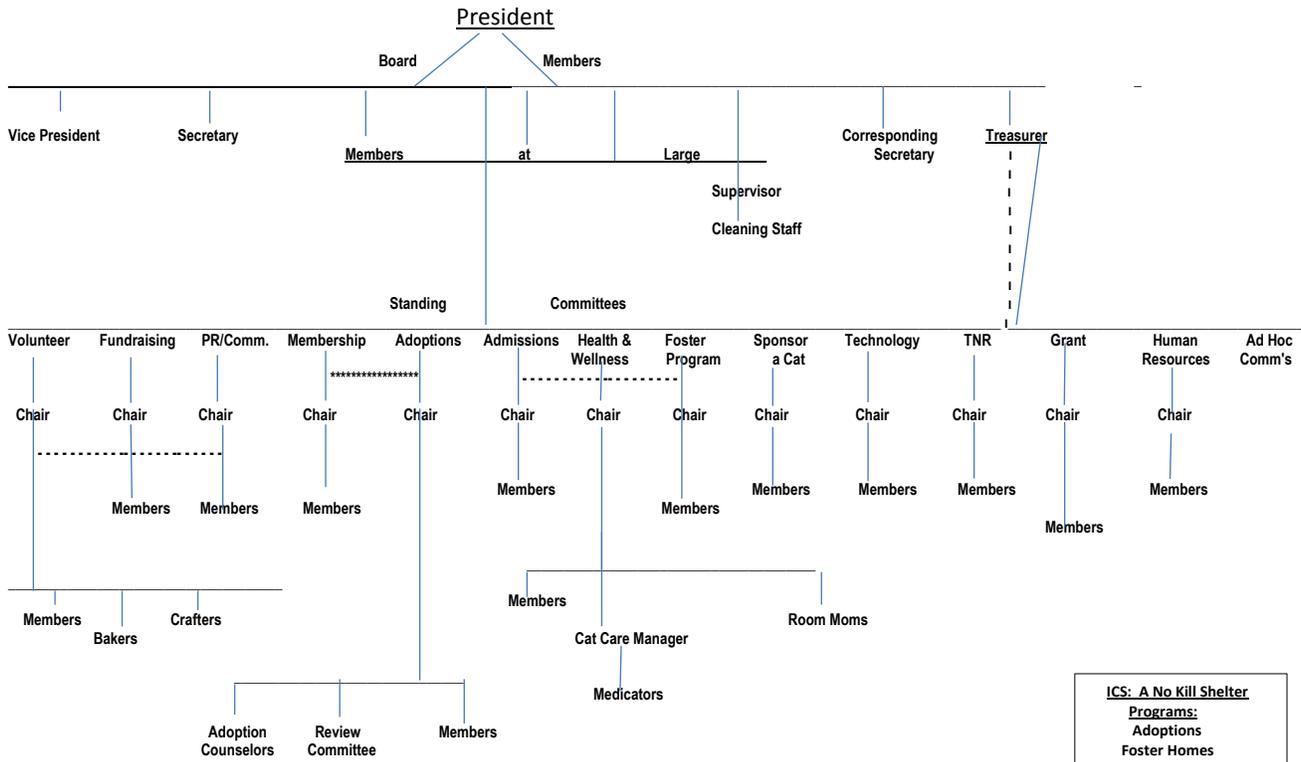
- 1 The **Health and Wellness Committee** is responsible for the care of all cats accepted at the shelter. This committee coordinates closely with the Adoption Committee.
- 2 The **Public Relations/Communications Committee** is responsible for all communications about the society and its programs, including advertising, displays, educational programs, flyers/posters, forms, letters, and letters to the editor, newsletters, photography, press releases, signage, and Web content.
- 3 The **Fundraising Activities Committee** plans and coordinates fundraising events.
- 4 The **Finance Committee** prepares an organizational budget and oversees expenses.
- 5 The **Volunteer Committee** is responsible for recruiting, scheduling and supervising volunteers, in coordination with the Health and Wellness Committee.
- 6 The **Membership Committee** sends out materials to new and renewing members, issues membership cards and maintains a list of all members in good standing, plans membership meetings and conducts membership drives.
- 7 The **Foster Care committee** is responsible for evaluating foster homes and placing cats and kittens in them.
- 8 The **Adoption Committee** is responsible for scheduling and training adoption counselors and distributing all potential adoption applications to the review subcommittee.
- 9 The **Admissions Committee** is responsible for determining which cats are admitted to the shelter.
- 10 The **TNR committee** (trap/neuter/release) is responsible for educating the public about the importance of spay **and neutering your animals**.
- 11 **Human Resources** is responsible for maintaining personnel records and assisting with the hiring and firing.
- 12 The **Grants Committee** is responsible for finding and writing grants to improve the financial and general well-being of the cats and the organization.
- 13 The **Technology Committee** is responsible for website development, PetPoint database, and other technological functions of the shelter.

Special committees established by the board include:

- 1 The **Building Fund Committee**, which oversees the fundraising efforts for the Building Fund, intended to work toward replacing our existing shelter structure.



Independent Cat Society - Organizational Plan



Legend: (Feb. 2013)

— Direct Relationship

***** Sharing of addresses

----- Coordinated Communication

****** Please Note:** (1) A Representative from the Finance Comm is to attend all Committee Mtgs.
 (2) All Committee Chairs are to send Membership Committee & Corresponding Secretary every new, deleted or revised e-mail and snail mail addresses.

ICS: A No Kill Shelter Programs:
 Adoptions
 Foster Homes
 Sponsor a Cat
 TNR
 Spay & Neuter
 Speaker's Bureau
 Senior Program
 Community Partnerships

2013 Board of Directors

President	Staci Trekles
Vice President	Judy Lindmark
Treasurer	Natalie Cebulski
Recording Secretary	Judy Dean
Corresponding Secretary	Carol Albrecht
Board member	Diana Foster
Board member	Joan Hildebrand
Board member	Jen Stall
Board member	Gail Frieden

Standing Committees Contact People

Admissions	Paulette Gonzalez, Joan Hildebrand, Carol Abshire
Adoptions	Joan Hildebrand, Gail Frieden, Roberta Jocius, Judy Dean
Health and Wellness	Jen Stall, Paulette Gonzalez
Fundraising	Gail Frieden, Staci Trekles, Cate Amador
Finance	Natalie Cebulski, Judy Lindmark
Membership	Kathy Nielsen, Carol Albrecht
PR/Communications	Dorothy Ripperdan, Diana Foster
Volunteers	Judy Dean, Diana Foster
Sponsor-A-Cat	Carol Abshire/Beverly Overmeyer
Foster Care	Melissa Petrovich, Diane Buche
Technology	Monica Korzenecki, Staci Trekles
Grants	Roberta Jocius

Special Committees Contact People

Building Fund	Cate Amador
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History of the Independent Cat Society

Cat lovers in Beverly Shores, Indiana, met in late 1976 to discuss opening a no-kill cat shelter to help combat the problem of abandoned and homeless cats. The Independent Cat Society was established March 15, 1977.

Initially, all rescued cats were placed in and adopted from foster homes. In June 1979, the Independent Cat Society leased its first shelter in Michigan City, Indiana, and housed 35 cats. Five area veterinarians provided low-cost spay/neuter and discounted medical care.

Over the next 12 years, the shelter changed locations six times for various reasons beyond its control. Each time, volunteers moved the shelter's cats to a new location or successfully adopted them into permanent homes.

In 1983, the society initiated a Building Fund to eventually purchase property and build a shelter. In 1989, members found the three-acre property on which the shelter now stands. After successful zoning hearings and the completion of a 2,500 square foot pole barn building in early 1991, volunteers moved the cats there in the spring of 1991.

Volunteers completed most of the interior work on the shelter. The shelter includes an isolation building and ten rooms for housing healthy cats in the main shelter. In 2001, we completed construction of our attached 600 square-foot screen-enclosed run on the north side of the building.

The Independent Cat Society shelter is on three acres of wooded property at the northeast corner of U.S. Rt. 6 and the Porter/Laporte County Road in New Durham Township, Westville, Indiana. This is approximately one hour east of Chicago and 45 minutes west of South Bend, Indiana.

Shelter Programs

Health and Wellness (Cat Care)

When a cat or kitten is admitted, he or she is housed separately from cats in the main shelter. First, shelter volunteers give vaccines and necessary medications. Then, once a veterinarian examines and spays or neuters the cat, the cat joins the main shelter population and is available for adoption.

Members of the Health and Wellness Committee make sure all shelter cats receive veterinary attention, medications and vaccinations, and are spayed and neutered. The Health and Wellness Committee also oversees nutrition and diet, grooming, adoptions, and housing at the shelter.

Several local veterinarians provide discounted services to the Independent Cat Society in support of our mission.

For more information on Cat Care, please contact a member of the Health and Wellness Committee.

Foster Care

Cats admitted to the shelter often include those who need special medical attention, are recovering from injuries, or are expecting kittens. Because these cats need frequent human attention and interaction, and a quiet place to recuperate, they're cared for in the loving homes of the Independent Cat Society's Foster Care Program.

Foster Care volunteers care for these cats until they're fully rehabilitated, or until new moms have delivered and weaned their kittens. These animals are then spayed and neutered and taken to the shelter to be adopted.

Are you a work-at-home mom or professional who loves animals? An empty nester with love and a spare room to give? A retiree looking for a volunteer project? We're always looking for dependable people who can provide loving, temporary foster care in their homes for pregnant mother cats, newborn and orphaned kittens, or cats who can't live at the shelter because of an illness or injury. The shelter also needs "permanent" foster homes for cats with chronic diseases like diabetes and kidney failure.

Foster care parents should have a car to transport the cat to veterinary appointments when necessary. Expenses, such as medications and veterinary care, are handled by the Independent Cat Society. If you'd like to foster, but have pets of your own, the foster cat can live in a comfortable extra room in the home until he or she is well enough to return to the shelter or to be adopted.

If you'd like to be a foster parent for an Independent Cat Society cat, please contact the Foster Care Coordinators. They will interview you and may arrange for a home visit.

Adoptions

Cats and kittens are available for adoption, for a nominal fee that includes:

- 1 A veterinary examination
- 2 Spaying or neutering
- 3 Feline leukemia and FIV tests
- 4 Age-appropriate vaccinations
- 5 Parasite treatment
- 6 An identification tattoo or micro-chip
- 7 A temporary cardboard cat carrier
- 8 A free post-adoption exam at a participating veterinarian
- 9 30 Day Free Pet Health Insurance through ShelterCare in conjunction with PetFinders.com

Once the Independent Cat Society adopts a cat, volunteers conduct a follow-up telephone interview with the adopter to make sure the animal is happy and healthy in his or her new home, and to answer any questions the adopter may have.

The Independent Cat Society has a "lifetime return" policy -- we will happily take back any adopted cat, at any time for any reason, if the cat's guardian feels they can no longer care for the animal.

The shelter is open for adoptions Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Other adoption hours are by appointment.

For more information on adoptions, please contact a member of the Adoptions Committee.

Discount Spay/Neuter

The Independent Cat Society receives many calls from caring people in the community who rescue and care for stray cats. Because the shelter is almost always at capacity, we cannot admit most of these animals.

However, we can help with the Independent Cat Society's discounted spay/neuter program, Assisted Spay/Neuter. With the Assisted Spay/Neuter program, we can assist other caretakers to help cats who otherwise might become sick or injured, add to the overpopulation problem, and eventually, suffer a painful death.

In the Assisted Spay/Neuter program, the cat's guardian comes to the shelter during open hours, or by appointment, to complete necessary forms and to pay the assisted spay/neuter fee. He or she then makes an appointment with one of the vets who participate in this program and takes the cat to the vet for care.

For more information on Assisted Spay/Neuter, please contact a member of the Health and Wellness Committee.

Sponsor-A-Cat

Can't adopt? Sponsor-A-Cat! Our Sponsor-A-Cat program allows you to pledge a monthly gift of \$12.50 or more toward the care of a specific cat in the shelter. For your gift, you'll receive a photo and biography of your special cat and the satisfaction of knowing you are helping a homeless cat.

Many sponsors enjoy visiting their sponsored cat and sending toys and treats during the holidays and throughout the year.

Would your office or organization like to sponsor a cat? Several office groups and companies have enrolled in the Sponsor-A-Cat program. Or, are you affiliated with a social service organization, the Girl or Boy scouts, sorority or fraternity, or a school looking for a charitable project? We'd be happy to send a photograph of the sponsored cat for your office or meeting place. Contact us, or sign up for the Sponsor-A-Cat program with a form from our Web site, www.catsociety.org.

For more information on the Sponsor-A-Cat program, please contact the Sponsor-A-Cat Committee chairperson.

Membership

You can support the Independent Cat Society by becoming a member or renewing your membership each year. Current membership dues are: Corporate Member, \$1,000; Life Member, \$500; Gold Star Member, \$100; Family Member, \$50; Individual Member, \$25; Student Member, \$10; Senior Member, \$10. New members can also join through opening an account at any Allegius Credit Union location, and all ICS members can open accounts within the Allegius Credit Union also.

For more information on membership, please contact the Membership Committee chairperson.

Public Relations/Communications and Community Outreach

The Public Relations/Communications Committee is responsible for all communication about the society and its programs. All communications and changes to communications are approved by the committee. Please channel any communications request to the committee.

“Communications” include all internal and external publicity communications, including, but not limited to:

- 1 Printed communication, including: advertising, appeal letters; brochures; business cards; displays; flyers/posters; forms; letters to the editor; newsletters; press releases; signage; tickets; training or other manuals or information
- 2 Electronic communications, including: Web and Internet content; television or radio communications
- 3 Release of information to the media
- 4 Public and/or educational presentations
- 5 Photography of the shelter or cats for any purpose
- 6 Displays
- 7 Signage

For more information about the Independent Cat Society's Communications Policy and Communications Guidelines, please contact the Public Relations/Communications Committee.

The *Mewsletter* is the society's quarterly newsletter. Information in the newsletter includes stories about shelter programs, fundraising events, shelter animals, our "wish list," memorials, thank you notes and photos. More than 5,000 individuals and organizations receive the newsletter, and it is distributed to local libraries, businesses, vet clinics and other outlets.

The Independent Cat Society Web site is at <http://www.catsociety.org> and information about the shelter and adoptable cats is posted on here as well as at <http://petango.com>, which is another place to find our cat database. News releases about fundraising events and shelter programs are sent regularly to local media and posted on our Facebook page, (<http://facebook.com/indcatsociety>), Twitter feed (<http://twitter.com/indcatsociety>), and the website.

The Independent Cat Society also maintains a presence at many local community festivals and events. Volunteers also communicate the message of spay and neuter and kindness to animals by responding to public speaking requests from school and other community organizations.

Members of the Independent Cat Society also assist community residents solve animal behavior problems and other counseling, and information and assistance with trap/neuter/return activities for feral cats. For more help with these issues, please see our Web site, www.catsociety.org.

For more information on Public Relations/Communications and Community Outreach, please contact the Public Relations/Communications Committee chairperson.

Admissions Policy

Please remember that employees, volunteers and board members may not accept or admit cats, unless the cat is an Independent Cat Society cat being returned to the shelter or foster care, unless approved by the Admissions Committee.

What you should say to someone who comes to the shelter with a cat or calls about a cat they want us to admit?

Your response should be, "I'm sorry, we would like to help you, but we cannot because we are at capacity and we cannot accept cats at this time. However, there are several alternatives we would ask you to consider;"

- 1 If the cat is a stray, encourage the individual to adopt the cat or find someone else to adopt it.
- 2 Ask if they or someone else will keep the cat and explain our Assisted Spay/Neuter program.
- 3 Refer to other shelters, foster programs and veterinarians.
- 4 A list of alternatives is posted on our Web site at www.catsociety.org, ask the caller to review this list.

If you feel you cannot refuse an admission or if the animal is in an abusive situation, tell the person that you will take their name and phone number and have someone contact them. Contact a member of the Admissions Committee (Joan Hildebrand, Paulette Gonzalez, or Marti Rukavina).



P.O. Box 735 • Westville, IN, 46391 • 219-785-4936 • FAX 219-785-0029 • www.catsociety.org/ • shelter@catsociety.org

Vaccination Policy

The Independent Cat Society (ICS) of Westville, IN highly recommends all individuals employed by the ICS and volunteers who handle cats be up to date in their immunization against Tetanus. This recommendation is based on a number of potential hazards, including animal bites, cuts, outside hazards, scratches, etc.

Various references call for Tetanus vaccinations to be repeated every 5 to 10 years depending on the exposure to animals. ICS recommends the employee and the volunteer follow the guidelines from their Local County Health Department.

References: www.uptodate.com/contents/animal-bites
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus
Health Publishing, a Division of Wolters Kluwer Publishing Co., Philadelphia

In order to comply with this recommendation, please submit a copy of your Tetanus immunization, validated either by your primary care provider or by the nursing staff of your County Health Department. Please keep your original document(s) with your own personal records. The copy of your immunization will be attached to this form and kept in your employee file or volunteer binder.

Tetanus Immunization Type: Initial Booster Re-vaccination Date completed: _____

Provider's Name, Address, City: _____

Signature of ICS Board Human Resource Chair: _____ Date Filed: _____

Waiver to Comply with a Tetanus Vaccination

If you choose not to comply with this requirement, please complete and sign below which signifies your intent to

Not RECEIVE A TETANUS VACCINATION.

By signing below, as an employee or volunteer with the Independent Cat Society (ICS), I fully acknowledge ICS's Policy recommending a Tetanus vaccination; that I may be subject to various hazards and may encounter the effects of such a bite. **At this time, I choose not to comply with the Tetanus Vaccination Policy.** I acknowledge that an accident may require medical attention to treat any potential Tetanus resulting from an injury, and release ICS from any potential liability.

Name: _____ Address: _____

(Please Print)

City/State/Zip: _____ Phone Number: _____

Employee Position: _____ Volunteer Position: _____

Email address: _____ Signature: _____

Date Signed: Employee/Volunteer _____ Board Member or HR Chair: _____

ICS Board Member or Human Resources Comm. Chair Signature: _____

Make one copy for the employee/volunteer. The Original to be filed with the employee record/volunteer binder