



Cat containment

Cats allowed to roam free have shorter lives than those kept safely contained by owners. Roaming cats have an average lifespan of three years, compared to indoor cats that can live for fifteen or more.

There are many options for keeping cats contained to your property. There are fence fixtures you can attach atop fences or full enclosures which prevent your cat leaving your garden. Cats can also adapt well to indoor living. Visit dogandcatboard.com.au for information about keeping cats contained and tips for making the transition.

At the very least, cats should be kept indoors overnight. Some councils have introduced a curfew from dusk to dawn and some have full containment at all times. Contact your local council to find out whether containment or curfews apply for your area.

Indoor cats are safe from:

- **Cars:** cats can be injured or killed, or cause accidents, if allowed near roads.
- **Cat fight injuries:** the most common injury from cat fights is an abscess. Abscesses are incredibly painful and can require costly veterinary treatment. Diseases such as FIV can also be transmitted during cat fights.
- **Humans:** to reduce neighbour disputes and any potential harm to your cat it is safer to contain your cat to your property.
- **Dogs:** cats can be killed or seriously injured in dog attacks.
- **Wildlife:** preventing your cat from hunting wildlife, reduces the risk of it contracting diseases, fleas, lice, ticks or worms. Wildlife is safer too.

Good cats are the result of love and good management.

Pet ownership laws encourage responsible behaviours to protect you, your cat and your neighbours. They help guide positive attitudes and manage public expectations.

This guide outlines the responsibilities cat owners have under state laws. Councils often have additional by-laws for managing cats in their municipalities, so check these with your local council.

Visit dogandcatboard.com.au to learn more about responsible ownership.

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Legal responsibilities of cat owners

Cat owners have responsibilities to their cats and the community. In South Australia, the following laws apply for cats.

- **Mandatory microchipping**
- **Mandatory desexing**
- **Registering** these details in **Dogs and Cats Online**
- **Cat breeders and sellers must be registered** in Dogs and Cats Online and follow the South Australian Standards and Guidelines for Breeding and Trading Companion Animals

These laws were designed to help reunite owners with lost cats, prevent unwanted litters and improve information flow from breeders to buyers.

Many councils also have their own local by-laws to manage cat ownership. These can include limits, containment or curfews. You should check your council's local cat laws.

Mandatory microchipping

If you own a cat it must be microchipped. Microchipping is a safe and permanent way to identify a lost cat. Your cat must also wear a collar with a tag displaying your name and contact details when off your property.

- All cats **must be microchipped**
- Kittens must be microchipped by **12 weeks of age or at the point of sale**
- If you acquire a new cat that is not microchipped, it must have one implanted **within 28 days**

Microchips must be implanted by a veterinary surgeon or an approved person.

You should register your cat in Dogs and Cats Online by the microchip number your breeder, shelter, vet or previous owner gives you. They create the record but you will need to complete it with your personal details. See 'Registering your cat in Dogs and Cats Online'.

Mandatory desexing

Cats are prolific breeders. In just seven years, a single litter can produce thousands of cats if breeding is left unchecked. Many of these will be euthanised due to poor health and because there is not enough homes or resources to care for them. Desexing is the humane, practical solution.

- All cats born after 1 July 2018 **must be desexed by 6 months of age***
- When you acquire a new cat it **must be desexed within 28 days**

Cats can only be desexed by a registered veterinary surgeon.

*Exemptions apply. More information can be found at dogandcatboard.com.au

Why desex?

Desexing prevents unplanned litters. It also has positive health benefits and reduces unpleasant behaviour.

- Desexing can **increase your cat's life expectancy**
- It **reduces the risks of developing certain cancers**
- Desexing may reduce undesirable behaviours, such as **spraying, marking, fighting and yowling**
- It helps **reduce the number of cats and kittens** euthanised in pounds and shelters

Registering your cat in Dogs and Cats Online

In South Australia, microchipping and desexing your cat is mandatory, and owners must register this information in Dogs and Cats Online, South Australia's database for dogs, cats, breeders, microchip and desexing information. Not all councils charge cat registration fees (many don't).

Councils, the RSPCA, Animal Welfare League and vets use Dogs and Cats Online to identify lost pets and find their owners, so make sure you keep your details up-to-date. If you move into a new council area you must change your address in Dogs and Cats Online within 14 days. You can log into Dogs and Cats Online at any time to update your contact details or report your cat as missing by selecting 'lost' as its 'animal status'.

Visit Dogs and Cats Online at www.dogsandcatsonline.com.au

Cat breeders and sellers

There are laws to govern cat breeding and sales.

- **Breeders and sellers must adhere to the South Australian Standards and Guidelines for Breeding and Trading Companion Animals** which can be found on the Board's website
- Anyone selling a cat **must be registered (as a breeder)** in Dogs and Cats Online
- **Cats must be microchipped before sale**
- **Advertisements must include the seller's contact details** and Dogs and Cats Online breeder registration number

For more information visit:
dogandcatboard.com.au
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