



Kindness and Care for Animals®

April 12, 2012

Board of Selectmen
Town House, P.O. Box 535
22 Monument Square
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Board of Selectmen:

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) works to address cat overpopulation, general cat welfare, and the status of cats in society and a daily part of our work is encouraging people to keep their cats indoors.

The great outdoors may sound like fun for a cat — but there are many dangers outside. Most people accept that we cannot let our dogs roam loose – for their safety and that of our neighbors, other companion animals, and wildlife. Many people have different attitudes about cats, however, even though they experience the same hazards and can cause the same problems. Therefore, the MSPCA strongly advises that all cats be kept indoors only or allowed outside only under supervision.

Companion animals allowed to roam can: get hit by vehicles and cause traffic accidents, be poisoned by sweet-tasting un-treated antifreeze or other toxins, fight with other animals risking injury or disease, be victims of animal cruelty, and interact with wildlife risking disease transmission, such as rabies, and acting as predator and/or prey. The MSPCA's Angell Animal Medical Center treats cats who are victims of wildlife attacks and wildlife attacked by cats – many animals do not survive such interactions.

Outdoor cats can also contract various internal and external parasites, such as worms and fleas, which would not be problematic if they were kept indoors. Furthermore, cats who roam the neighborhood may urinate and defecate in neighbors' gardens or their children's' sandboxes, posing health threats for people.

The MSPCA Adoption Centers, and other Massachusetts animal shelters, are often overwhelmed with homeless cats. Outdoor cats can contribute to the cat overpopulation problem.

Many people believe that cats need to go outdoors, but this is not true. Cats will live longer, healthier lives when kept indoors only. The average life span for a cat who goes outside is 16 months; for a cat who stays inside it is 16 years. We advise people to make the "great indoors" fun and entertaining for their cats — grow cat greens, have lots of fun toys, and find a sturdy, good quality scratching post. Cats can be safely allowed outside on a cat harness and leash or in a securely screened porch or enclosed fence; they will use cat doors to move from inside a building to the enclosed area outdoors.

Even indoor cats should always wear a breakaway collar, identification tag, and rabies tag because accidents happen and they can get outdoors. Microchipping cats is a good idea, too, since collars can be lost or removed.

Sincerely,

Kara Holmquist
Director of Advocacy