

## **Dakin Humane Society feline transport guidelines**

Dakin Humane Society is an open admission, open adoption facility. Approximately 6,000 animals per year are admitted to our adoption centers. Our Spay/Neuter Clinic has performed over 63,000 sterilization surgeries in 6 years; largely as a result, during the winter we may have few felines in our adoption centers. Our first responsibility is to our local animals; we take in out of area felines only when space permits.

We are able to take out of state kittens when we are not full of local kittens. In 2015 this has proved to be excellent availability winter and spring, and some availability summer.

We are able to take out of state cats when we are not full of local cats. We anticipate this to be primarily in the months of October-May.

The times in which local kittens and cats are scarce are expanding each year for us, therefore so does our ability to accept out of state felines.

Our adoption centers have a full time veterinarian (with another two in our Spay/Neuter Clinic), veterinary technicians, and other skilled staff. Our cats reside in either double sided cages or colony rooms. We welcome your visit – contact your Dakin liaison to set up a tour!

### **Massachusetts state regulations**

Massachusetts has regulations for the import of cats and dogs from other states, which we must fully comply with. These regulations require that:

- Every animal has a health certificate issued by a veterinarian prior to travel (should be within 10 days of travel).
- Upon arrival, all animals must immediately enter a Massachusetts-approved quarantine facility (we have one in our building) and remain there for 48 hours.
- After 48 hours, each animal must receive an examination from a veterinarian and be issued a new health certificate stating that the animal is free of contagious disease. Any animal showing any signs of contagious disease cannot receive a health certificate, or leave the quarantine area until a health certificate can be issued. Signs of contagious disease include, but are not limited to; hair loss, diarrhea, coughing, sneezing, eye or nose discharge. Animals on medications for potentially contagious diseases may not be released from quarantine even if no symptoms are present at the time of examination.
- Any animal with any injury which may be a “wound of unknown origin” (either present on the animal, or in his/her medical record) may not be released from quarantine. Massachusetts’ definition of “wound of unknown origin” is “any injury which may have been caused by the bite or scratch of another animal”. Massachusetts has no defined mechanism for releasing these animals from quarantine, ever.

In order to continue accepting animals from out of state, we must ensure that animals entering quarantine clear it on schedule. When animals fail to clear quarantine, other transports may need to be cancelled; they cannot enter the quarantine space while the previous transport's animals remain in it. This places an undue burden on the group whose transport is cancelled, wastes resources they have spent preparing animals to transport, and may jeopardize lives. For this reason, ensuring animals clear quarantine promptly is critical to us.

## **Behavior**

Choosing the right personality/behavior is one of the most critical parts of feline transport, in our experience. Cats who can successfully withstand the stresses of transport are those who are “bombproof”; they are happy, friendly, outgoing, glad to meet anyone and immediately solicit attention from strangers— nothing bothers them. When meeting new people they immediately purr and rub on the person. They are great candidates for placement with young children.

***Cats with any of the following behavior are not candidates for transport to Dakin:***

- are shy or who hide
- are slow to get to know you
- have rules about how they can be touched
- one person cats
- who have scratched or bitten and broken skin
- any history of house soiling
- Sassy cats, cats with “attitude”, “cattitude”, “tortitude”, or whatever your preferred phrase
- known to injure other cats
- cats who would prefer to be the only cat

## **Medical criteria for out of state feline transports:**

***The sending shelter*** must provide for each animal:

- Health certificate, dated within 10 days of travel. Each animal must be clearly identified on health certificates. Multiple animals on one certificate are acceptable, as long as each is clearly identified.

- FVRCP vaccine (modified live, injectable vaccines only), at least one vaccine, given at least 7 days before transport. If animal is in custody longer than 14 days, vaccine should be repeated. In kittens under 16 weeks, most recent vaccine must be within 21 days of transport.
- Pyrantel or equivalent worming product for roundworms.
- Advantage or equivalent product for fleas.

**Sending shelter** must ensure each animal is completely healthy and free from any signs of contagious disease. Any animal exhibiting any signs of contagious disease, including but not limited to diarrhea, coughing, sneezing, hair loss, runny or inflamed eyes must not transport.

**Sending shelter** must do a final check-over of each animal *the day of transport*. Each animal must be checked by a qualified person to ensure that the animal remains healthy and shows no signs of contagious disease or hair loss.

Animals with diagnosed, non-contagious disease (eg congenital deformity) will be considered for transport on a case by case basis. Contact your Dakin liaison with details about each animal to be considered. Please do not send animals that have ever been suspected of having ringworm, who have ever been diagnosed with ringworm, or who have been treated for ringworm, regardless of treatment administered or current health or symptom status.

**Animals who have injuries which may have possibly been caused by the bite or scratch of another animal (either currently, or in their medical record) may not transport under any circumstances. They cannot be released from quarantine in Massachusetts.**

**Sending shelter** must send full medical records for each transported animal, including health certificates. Animals having received a rabies vaccine prior to transport must transport with rabies tag and certificate.

**Sending shelter** is strongly encouraged to place transport animals into foster care for at least two weeks prior to transport. Animals are much more likely to successfully transport, and pass quarantine, if this is done. Animals will be accepted if this is not possible, as long as they reliably pass quarantine release after arrival at Dakin.

**Dakin will provide:** quarantine as required by Massachusetts, vet exam for quarantine release in Massachusetts. Dakin will also provide as needed spay/neuter, microchip, FeLV/FIV testing, and additional vaccines and health care as needed after arrival.

## **Transport**

Transport of the animals to Dakin (171 Union Street, Springfield, MA) is the responsibility of the sending shelter. Cats must travel in plastic carriers or metal crates – no cardboard boxes. Each animal must be clearly identified with a collar and/or tag on the pet, and also have their name on their carrier. A feline-only transport (no dogs on board) is greatly preferred. We are happy to give your carriers back to your transport person; ensuring you get your carriers back is the responsibility of your transport person – they need to ask for them and wait for them.

In some cases, Dakin may be able to arrange pick up of animals located under 2 hours from our Springfield facility.

Animals must arrive at Dakin during the hours of 8 am – 5 pm.

## **Finances**

Each organization is responsible for the medical care that happens on their end of the transport. The sending organization is responsible for transport costs. Dakin is responsible for all costs incurred after the animals' arrival at Dakin. In some cases, a small reimbursement may be available for transported kittens (under 5 months of age); enquire with your Dakin liaison.

## **When transported felines have major issues**

Any animal transported to Dakin becomes Dakin's animal. Should a euthanasia decision need to be made (due to an animal's severe medical or behavioral problem) that responsibility rests with Dakin as the receiving organization. Should this situation arise, the sending organization would be notified so they can learn more about the issue and ensure that similar animals are not transported in the future. Dakin will not hold transported felines with medical or behavioral issues severe enough to warrant euthanasia for a sending organization to pick up.

## **Age of transported animals**

Your Dakin liaison will let you know whether we are able to accept imported kittens, imported adults - or both - at any particular time. What we can accept depends on our local population, with greater availability for kittens than for cats.

Kittens must be at least 8 weeks AND 2 pounds minimum.

Adults 2 years and under are strongly preferred, but correct temperament is more important. Adults over 5 years should be cleared with your Dakin liaison on a case by case basis.

Please note that Dakin does not leave mom behind if she is an adoptable animal. Even if it is a time of year when we are accepting only kittens and not adults, if you are sending us a litter, send the mom if she also meets transport criteria and is in need of a home. If you have questions about a specific mom whose litter is transporting, please speak with your Dakin liaison.

We can often accept pregnant cats to send to foster for queening. As we do not have an overpopulation of kittens in our area, our current protocol is to send pregnant cats to foster to queen, and spay after queening (all other animals are spayed/neutered prior to leaving our building). Pregnant cats must be approved on a case by case basis. Moms with litters under the age of 8 weeks will be considered for transport for short distance (under 4 hours) transports only, and must be approved on a case by case basis.

### **Size of transports/first transports**

Typically we do small transports for the first one or two with a new organization, so that we can both figure out what's working well and what needs to be adjusted. Each group is different and it's always a learning experience for both of us.

We have various spaces that are approved for out of state cats and dogs. When you reserve a space for each transport, your Dakin liaison will talk with you about how many cages are available in your reserved space, and whether we are currently able to accept kittens, cats, or both.

Cages are double sided cages of varied sizes, or roofed over dog runs. What can you put in one of these spaces? Each can accommodate; one or two adults (adults from the same house who get along well); or a mom and litter of up to 5 kittens; or a litter of up to six kittens without mom. Obviously, sending litters of kittens is the best way to maximize the number of animals on each transport.

Quarantine approved rooms at Dakin vary from four to nine cages. Six rooms are quarantine approved in total; three are dog or cat, three rooms are cat only. Multiple rooms can be booked if space is available, once successful relationships have been established.

The sending organization selects the animals they want to send, based on cages available, whether Dakin can accept kittens or cats. The sending organization should choose the animals that best meet Dakin's transport guidelines, and best meet the sending organization's needs.

We strongly suggest that for the first transport or two, you send your Dakin liaison a list of proposed animals and their medical history. This has proved helpful in ensuring the sending

organization has read and understood these guidelines properly and is selecting the correct animals for transport.

Once we have a few successful transports, the sending organization should be able to successfully fill the available cages on their own. We do not need you to send photos, descriptions etc of the animals prior to transport - unless you want to send animals who are in categories of check with us first, for example with non contagious medical issues. We believe the sending organization has more important things to do with their time than send this type of info every transport. Once we know you've got the hang of it, we trust you to send appropriate animals.

We recommend reserving your quarantine space/transport at Dakin as soon as you know you can commit to a transport. Quarantine spaces are used by all incoming out of state dog and cat transports on a reservation basis.