

# Spot Cleaning Cat Cages

Spot cleaning done right can be healthier for cats and more efficient for shelter staff than daily full cleaning and disinfection. Download the "Instructions for Spot Cleaning Cat Cages" PDF.

Spot cleaning is a method of daily cleaning that is low stress for the cats, and reducing stress is a priority for shelter cat health. Two important causes of stress in shelter cats are moving a cat in and out of its cage (or into a new cage) and handling cats during cleaning. Spot cleaning allows cats to stay in their familiar housing environment with minimal handling during the most stressful time of the day: cleaning time.

Housing cats in [cages that are double-sided](#) facilitates spot cleaning as the side not occupied by the cat can be tidied and cleaned, then the cat can move into the clean side while the other compartment side is cared for. However with a little care even single compartment units can often be spot cleaned. "Walk-in housing" such as group housing or large runs or rooms also works well for spot cleaning.

Spot cleaning is accomplished with the cat remaining in the housing unit while it is tidied, beds made, litter box maintained and any remaining food and water removed and a fresh supply provided. Actual cleaning (soap and water or disinfectant cleaner) only occurs as needed to remove organic material from the surface areas - for many housing units this is not needed on a daily basis. Spot cleaning helps reduce risk of disease transmission because cats are minimally handled during cleaning thus the movement of germs from one cat to another is greatly reduced.

Spot cleaning is efficient for the staff as well! Spot cleaning allows staff more time after cleaning for other animal care needs, individual cat attention and time to perform tasks that may not otherwise be accomplished when thorough cleaning of every housing unit is performed on a daily basis.

*Spot cleaning is not appropriate for cleaning a cage in preparation for a new cat arrival, or when the cage is so heavily soiled that a thorough cleaning with soap and water is required -- these are the times for deep cleaning and disinfection. It also may not be suitable for fractious or dangerous cats or groups of kittens unless they can be safely confined in a "feral cat box", carrier or to one side of a double-compartment cage.*

For detailed information, download our instructions for spot cleaning cat cages in the attachment below.