Animal Intake & Inventory – Cat Hoarding

For large scale cat hoarding situations, the intake and inventory system will differ from that of the general Animal Intake/Inventory process. Large scale cat hoarding situations will likely include a variety of feral and friendly cats, and given the nature of the environment, capture of even the friendly animals can be a challenge. For that reason, cats should be secured into crates/carriers as quickly as possible after capture. This additional security measure alters the identification process, however, every animal shall still receive a unique animal ID number prior to being removed from the scene. The following document outlines the process for tagging cats and keeping an accurate inventory of each when removing them from a large scale hoarding case. Maintaining a photographic and written record of all animals removed from a scene is critical to building a case. This evidentiary data will be reviewed by investigators, law enforcement, lawyers and other key players.

Materials needed
Animal Identification
- Crate/Cage Labeling
- Collars and ID tags

Triage Markers for medical or behavior concerns
- Flagging tape

Inventory Documentation
- ID Photo
- Case-board (dry erase board)
- Inventory Log

Animal Identification – Crate/Cage Labeling
For safety reasons in large scale cat hoarding situations, animals should be secured in crates/carriers immediately after capture. Even a friendly cat can become stressed quickly in that environment and escape.
- Using duct tape or heavy duty stickers and permanent markers, pre-label the front and right side of crate/cage with ID numbers. The number on the crate/carrier will become the ID number of the cat that is secured into that crate.
- If dealing with a multi-room situation where it becomes important to identify which room each cat originates from, assign colors to each room. Next to the ID number tag on the crate/carrier, place a corresponding colored sticker which will identify the rooms in which each cat was captured.

2.0 ACTIONS: Animal Identification – Collars and ID Tags
Since cats will be secured in crates/carriers immediately following capture, collars and tags will not be applied directly to the animal at this time. Collars and tags will be applied to the cats during the exam process, in a controlled environment where it will be safer to remove them from carriers and handle them.

- After crate/carrier is marked with an ID number, secure a collar and tag with the same number to the carrier (either by tying around carrier handle, or slipping through door grate and securing). As each cat reaches the exam station, the collar and ID tag should be ready to be applied to the cat.
- For cats, collars should be made of a nylon coated elastic material that will stretch and allow cat to break free should it become entangled. (see figure 2.2). “Identibands” or other paper collars should not be used if avoidable as they are not reliable in many situations.
- ID tags should be made of metal or similar material not easily chewed by the animal wearing it or other animals it may be co-housed with. Tags should be affixed to collars with small key-rings or S-hooks.
- ID tags should be pre-marked with ID numbers (either permanently etched by manufacturer or by using a permanent marker). (See figure 2.4)
- As each animal is transferred to the intake area, a collar with ID tag should be applied to the animal.

Triage Marking – Flags

In the case of a large scale cat hoarding situations, flagging animals becomes especially critical. Animals are flagged with colored tape to provide a visual alert to the medical and sheltering staff receiving the animals (See figure 3.0). When there are both friendly and feral cats being removed from a property, the flags eliminate the need to guess whether an animal poses a threat or not. Colors will depend on availability, but when possible, flag with the colors below.

- Flags should be affixed to the carrier/crate immediately after the animal is secured inside. Behavior colors (Green, Yellow or Red) should be indicated for every cat to assist the medical team in deciding how to handle a particular cat during the exam process. Further assessments will be made by medical personnel once in the exam station, but flags will help identify which cats may be easier to handle, or may need sedation.
- BLUE - Medical Cases: Veterinarian on property sweep will have removed any animals in critical condition (see property sweep protocol). This flag will alert the shelter staff of
any non-critical medical conditions that should receive attention soon after arrival at emergency shelter.

- **PINK - Pregnant/Nursing**: This flag will alert shelter staff that the animal is either pregnant, or with young who have not yet weaned. This animal may be kept in a separate, quieter area away from the general shelter population whenever possible.

- **YELLOW - Aggression**: This important flag alerts shelter staff to an animal that has displayed aggression either during the removal/handling process or during the intake process and should be handled with caution.

- **RED - Bite/Quarantine**: Indicates that this animal has already bitten during the removal, handling or intake processes, and should be handled with extreme caution and quarantined once at the shelter.

- **GREEN - Friendly**: When possible, this flag can be used to mark extremely outgoing/friendly animals.

![Figure 3.0](image)

Inventory Documentation – *ID Photos*

*Once cats are secured inside carrier, it may be challenging to get an ID photo, however, an attempt must be made to take an ID photo before the animal leaves the property, even if that photo is taken while animal is inside crate/carer.*

- For documentation purposes, one photo is taken of the animal, face on.
- This photo MUST include a case-board to identify the animal (see action 5.0). The case-board is held next to, above or below the animal’s head to allow for a close-up photograph of the face and the board.

Inventory Documentation – *Case-board*

*The case-board will be used in the identification photograph (see figure 5.0). It should include the following information:*

- Case number
- Date
- Location
Inventory Documentation – Inventory Log
An Inventory Log will be the final documentation of every animal removed from the scene. This form should include the following information:

- Animal ID number
- Breed
- Color
- Gender
- Age
- Number of young associated with animal (if applicable)
- Any relevant comments about that animal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elastic or similar collars for cats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metal or similar ID tags with pre-marked numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital camera</td>
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<td>Memory card</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry erase board</td>
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<td>Dry erase markers</td>
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<td>Duct tape</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent markers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flagging tape in various colors</td>
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