



Support Animals
Save Lives
Spread Compassion

Resolving Litter Box Problems

Why do some cats eliminate outside the litter box?

Litter box problems may arise due to changes in your cat's health, as a result of conflict between multiple pets in the home, or due to a developed aversion to the content or location of the box.

1. Check your litter box set-up

Ensure your cat is comfortable accessing their litter box.

- Provide at least two litter boxes for each of your cats.
- Ensure that the boxes are large enough for your cat to easily enter and move around.
- Place the boxes in socially significant areas, but away from their food and water bowls.
- Thoroughly clean your cat's litter boxes daily.
- Use litter that your cat prefers and fill the boxes one to two inches deep with it.
- Lower the sides of the boxes for your special needs or older cats.

2. Consult your veterinarian

Ensure that your cat has a clean bill of health. This allows you to rule out or appropriately treat common medical problems that lead to elimination problems such as:

- Urinary tract infections
- Kidney stones or blockage
- Side effects of certain medications

3. Rule out urine marking

Some cats, especially unneutered or stressed cats, might communicate by [urine marking](#). This is different from typical urination and requires different treatment tactics.

- Urine marking often occurs on vertical surfaces, with less volume than typical urination.

4. Change your cat's associations with inappropriate elimination areas

Make eliminating outside of their litter box less appealing. Cats are generally clean animals and do not like to eat and eliminate in the same space.

- Move your cat's food bowl to the area where they're having accidents.
- Be sure to thoroughly clean the area with enzymatic cleaner first.

5. Work with a trainer

Work with a Certified Feline Training and Behavior Specialist if:

- Your cat is stressed or frustrated.
- Your cat has developed a negative association with their box.

6. Avoid punishing your cat

Punishment and other coercive tactics will cause even more problems.

- Do not scold your cat or rub their nose in urine or feces.
- Do not drag them to or force them inside the litter box.