

How to Clean a Cat Cage

Cleaning a cat cage is something shelter workers do every day. It's a relatively simple task, but you'll need to take your time and follow the steps in the proper order. Do it hastily and you may do more harm than good. Thoroughly clean each cage at least once a day and do "spot checks" on your cats' accommodations to make sure everything's spotless. A clean cage will minimize the spread of disease and will reflect the level of care that your shelter provides each animal. An improperly disinfected cage invites health problems in cats and may even increase the animals' stress level. Remember also to clean walls, windowsills, and especially floors at least once daily.

Plan cleaning and other activities with "life-stage groupings" in mind: Clean the cages of kittens first, adult cats second, and sick or injured cats last. Use a separate set of cleaning equipment for each life-stage group or thoroughly disinfect the items after every step.



1: Make a Move

Remove the cat from the cage and place her in a clean cage or carrier. Ideally, your shelter should set aside one empty cage for every cat in your care, so that each cat can be transferred from the dirty cage to the clean cage every day. If your shelter houses cats in carriers while cleaning, disinfect the carrier after each use to prevent the spread of disease.



2: Empty the Place

Remove every item from the cage, including food and water dishes, litter pan, blanket, and toys. If newspaper is used to line the cage, dispose of it daily. Wash dishes and pans, soak them in disinfectant according to label directions, then rinse and air-dry each item prior to reusing (or use a dishwasher to accomplish the same task). Blankets should be cleaned daily in a washing machine. Toys should be kept with the same cat throughout his stay, and then disinfected or disposed of afterward.

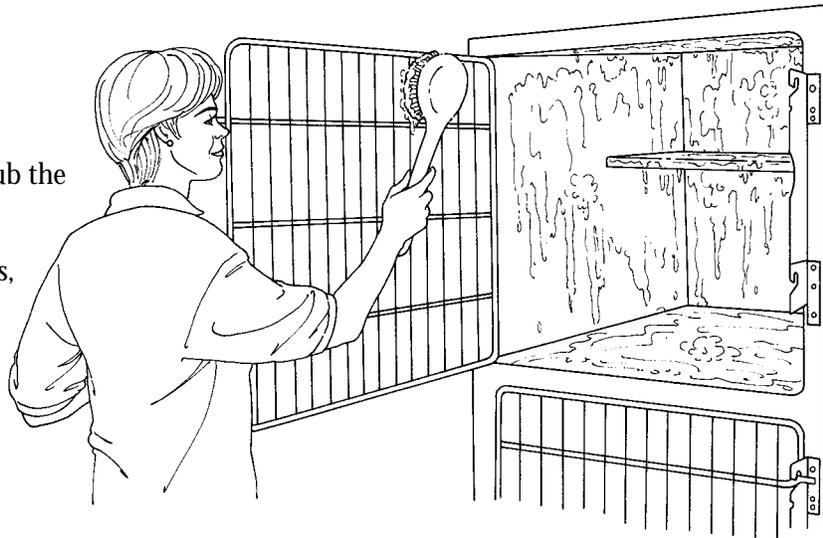


3: Just Add Water and Spray

Now, disinfect the cage. Read the product label carefully and be sure to dilute disinfectants according to the instructions. (Be especially careful to dilute bleach and thoroughly rinse surfaces after its use because bleach may corrode metal cages, ruin clothing, and even irritate cats' nasal passages and upper airways.) Thoroughly apply the solution to all surfaces of the cage, including the cage door.

4: Give 'em the Brush Off

Use a hard-bristled nylon brush to scrub the floor, walls, and ceiling of each cage. Don't forget to scrub and disinfect the front and back of the cage door, hinges, latches, the top of the cage, and the surfaces between cages. The solution needs time to work its magic, so allow it to stand for the time specified by the manufacturer.



5: Dry and Dry Again

Use a squeegee or paper towel to dry the cage as thoroughly as possible, then wait a few minutes to allow the cage to air-dry completely.



6: Add the Finishing Touches

Provide about five or six layers of newspaper, bedding, a clean litter pan, food, fresh water, and a toy.

