

Managing Public Reservations



We offer two types of clinics: Public and Private. For more information on the differences between these clinics, please read [Using Public and Private Clinics](#).

The reservations system is not perfect, but these guidelines help us keep clinics as full as possible without going over our limit very often.

When someone requests a reservation, we ask if the gender is known. Most, if not all, of the NET (non-ear-tip) reservations are known gender. Sometimes people are wrong, but not often and certainly, not many in one day. Of all cats whose gender is known, we reserve 50% female.

When reservations are requested for ET (ear-tip) surgeries, oftentimes the cats' genders aren't reliably known. We assume these cats will be about 60% female. If we reserve a higher proportion of unknown cats in a clinic, then we reserve a little less than 50% known females among the NET (non-ear-tip) reservations.

The no-show rate for trapped cats is the most unpredictable and unreliable piece of the puzzle. Cat behavior, weather, human behavior and who knows what else all affect how many cats are trapped during any given effort. Because our clinics usually run about half NET (non-ear-tip) cats, poor trapping yield causes less effect on our total clinic turnout. Our perfect clinic is 50 cats with 25 females. In our attempt to achieve that, we reserve 40 cats and keep 10 standby slots.

If we have days where turnout is low in spite of our best efforts, we call the people who usually have cats waiting, either rescuers with adoptable kittens or trappers who we know are working on large or new colonies. Quite often, someone is able to bring in cats to help fill the clinic.

On the other hand, when turnout is too high, we use the following guidelines to determine which cats receive priority for surgery:

EAR TIP PRIORITY

Cats being altered that will be ear-tipped receive priority for surgery over cats that are not getting ear-tipped. In general, cats being ear-tipped exhibit feral behavior. These cats are unwelcome at most veterinary practices and have fewer places to choose from for spay/neuter surgery. In some cases, our clinic is the cat's only chance of getting spayed or neutered. Because tame cats can be spayed or neutered at almost every veterinary practice, we prioritize feral-behaving cats over tame cats.

GENDER PRIORITY

Female cats receive surgical priority over male cats. Spay surgery is more involved than neuter surgery, and female cats require more time to recover. We prefer to have spays completed sooner in the day, so that we have more time to monitor their recoveries. If we can determine each cat's gender, then it is easier to do females first, to pace the surgeon with spays and to allow the female cats more time to recover before leaving the clinic. Male cats can be delayed until later in the day, because their surgery is simpler, faster and less likely to have complications.

AGE PRIORITY

Kittens under four pounds typically go into surgery earlier in the day, so that they recover earlier, and we can expedite feeding them soon after awakening. Unlike adult cats, kittens have very little fat and energy stores in their bodies. Because of anesthesia, all cats need to be held off food prior to surgery when possible. If kittens are without food for too long, then they can develop low blood sugar and have difficulty recovering from anesthesia. In severe cases, kittens can experience a hypoglycemic seizure, have prolonged anesthetic recovery or die. We reduce these risks by doing their surgeries first and returning them to food as soon as it is safe.

(Continued on the following page)

(Managing Public Reservations, continued)



HEALTH PRIORITY

We have similar concerns about thin cats as we have for kittens. We want to feed these cats as soon as it is safe, thus, we try to get surgery done on thin cats earlier in the day.

PREGNANCY PRIORITY

Pregnant cats are operated earlier in the day than other cats. Spaying a pregnant cat is more involved, more time consuming and can be more risky. We prefer to have pregnant cats finished earlier in the day, so that we maximize our time to observe their recoveries. If there were any hint of a complication or slow recovery, we would rather deal with it earlier in the day and preserve more time for treatment, if needed.

TRAVEL PRIORITY

Because high volume, high quality spay/neuter is not widely available in our state, some people transport cats to us from as far as 6-8 hours away. In consideration of the drive and fatigue, we try to get their cats done as early as possible and get the drivers back on the road home.