



The City of Darebin has introduced a night-time cat curfew (from 7pm to 7am), beginning 1st January 2021. This curfew applies 7 days a week, year-round. This means that residents must keep their cats confined within their property boundary during this time.

Why has a night cat curfew been introduced?

Cats are most active at night, particularly at dusk and dawn. This coincides with the activity periods of many species of native wildlife. The City of Darebin is home to more than 179 species of significant plants and animals. Council works to protect and enhance remnant local native and indigenous vegetation and wildlife; predation was an important driving factor when Council resolved to introduce a cat curfew.

Confining cats at night not only benefits wildlife. Benefits to cats and the community include:

- Cats that are kept inside at night generally live much longer than cats that are allowed outside to roam.
- Around 80% of accidents involving cats occur at night.
- Wandering cats are vulnerable to disease and attacks from other cats or dogs. Feline Aids, which is ultimately fatal for a cat, is transmitted from cat to cat through fighting.
- Confining cats at night minimises the risk of injury and prevent it from fighting and wandering onto neighbouring properties.
- Roaming cats also cause disputes and anxiety between neighbours - by causing dogs to bark, by fighting with other cats, urinating and defecating in neighbouring gardens and breeding.

Can my cat still go outside?

During the curfew, your cat must not leave your property boundary. You may choose to supervise outside time or install cat proof fencing, netting or an enclosure. Other options for confinement during this time may be setting up a shed or keeping your cat inside.

There is no curfew during the day, however Council does recommend confining your cat within your property boundary during the day also.

Do I still need to register my cats if it is confined to my property?

Yes. All cats and dogs over the age of 3 months MUST be registered with their local Council – this is a requirement under Victorian law, as outlined in the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Registration fees not only cover the cost of a collection and return service should your cat find itself lost. Your fee contributes to many other animal-related initiatives in your community such as:

- A 24/7 emergency animal collection service.
- A pound service and animal adoption centre.

Darebin City Council
ABN 75 815 980 522

Postal Address
PO Box 91
Preston VIC 3072
T 03 8470 8888
darebin.vic.gov.au

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- A program to subsidise the desexing of pets living in Darebin and regular discounted microchipping opportunities.
- A portion of the registration fee includes the State Government Levy which is used to help provide education programs for schools and preschools as well as adults. The levy is also used to fund State Government research into dog and cat welfare and control issues.
- One free pet registration per household for pensioners.
- Registration also assists Council to collect information about local animal populations that informs planning and funding for future animal-related activities.
- Animal Management staff to be able to respond to animal complaints within the community such as dog attacks, nuisance animals, stray and injured animals and to also patrol parks.
- Education for the local community such as publications, social media messaging and school visits.
- Domestic animal business audits.
- Management of dangerous and restricted breed dogs.
- Emergency welfare boarding for pets of victims of domestic violence.

What do I do if I see a cat out during curfew hours?

Council Officers WILL NOT be patrolling or responding to reports of roaming cats during curfew hours.

Cat owners WILL NOT be penalised if a cat is caught for the first time overnight.

If there is a cat that trespasses on your property without your permission (day or night), check to see if the cat is owned by your neighbours. Start with having a gentle and respectful conversation regarding the impacts of their cats wandering and responsibilities regarding cat ownership.

If the issue cannot be resolved this way, you may contact Council on 8470 8888 during business hours and a service request will be lodged with the Animal Management Team.

A cat trap may be booked. Please see www.darebin.vic.gov.au/pets for more information on cat trapping within the City of Darebin.

I don't know how to get my cat to come home by 7pm. What do I do?

Whilst there will only be an overnight cat curfew, Council does recommend that cats are confined within their property boundary at all times.

If your cat is outside normally during the curfew try changing their routine by:

- Introducing an earlier feed time (if fed in the evenings) and then keep your cat inside/confined overnight
- Supervise outdoor time
- Enrichment for your cat whilst it is confined eg. toys, treats etc
- Consider other ways to keep your cat safe and confined such as cat enclosures, netting or cat runs.

Will I be fined if my cat is caught?

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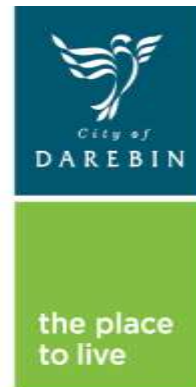
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Please note: Council does not set traps, however residents are able to borrow one from Council if a trespassing cat is causing nuisance on their property.

If your cat is contained and is not identifiable or registered with Council, it will be taken to the Epping Animal Welfare Facility. Release and registration fees will apply to collect your cat. Penalties may also apply for unwanted trespass on private property (after first offence).



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