

HOW DO CAT SHOWS WORK?

Cat shows are typically held on weekends. Each show features a number of "rings," each with a different judge. Since the judges are not allowed to compare notes, your cat has a chance to win awards in each ring.

For more complete information on shows, pick up the ACFA brochure "*The Cat Show.*"

WHO CAN ENTER?

Registered cats and kittens are judged according to a written "standard" for their breed. The standard has been approved by a majority vote of the breeders of that breed within the association.

If you would like to exhibit in one of the classes for registered cats, it would be helpful to consult with the breeder of your cat or kitten, attend a cat show and see other cats or kittens within that breed, or purchase a copy of the standard (contact ACFA) for your breed and see how you think your animal meets the standard before your show. Many registered cats and kittens are sold as pet quality because they do not meet the standard well enough to be show cats in that breed.

If you have purchased a "pet quality" cat or kitten or have a "farm cat" or have rescued a pet, there's a special category just for you. It's called the **Household Pet (HHP)** class.

HHP's are cats which are more than 8 months old and have been neutered or spayed. They do NOT necessarily meet the standards for a particular breed and ARE NOT judged according to breed standards. Instead, they are evaluated according to health, cleanliness and "purr-sonality."

PREPARING FOR THE SHOW...

Once you've decided to show your cat, you'll need to obtain information on upcoming shows. Try contacting this club. **Be sure to enter in advance of the show!**

Other preparation includes getting your cat accustomed to being handled by strangers, getting used to a carrier, getting used to other cats and grooming.

Most cats are bathed prior to a show. For cats with greasy coats, bathing once a week for several weeks will make the coat nicer. Longhaired cats generally require the same treatment. Cats should have their nails clipped, ears cleaned.

It is very important that your cat be current on its vaccinations and be in a healthy condition to prevent the spread of disease both to your animal and to others.

Get kitty used to a certain bed or blanket, or, if kitty has a favorite toy, make plans to bring the toy or bed to the show. It is important for kitty to feel as comfortable as possible at the show.

You will need to provide cage curtains for the size cage you have selected. These cover the top, back and sides of the cage and prevent kitty from seeing other cats (and other cats from seeing kitty). These may be fancy custom-made items to sheets or towels carefully laid over the cage. Safety pins and binder clips are often used to secure the drapes to the cage. You need to think about drapes earlier than the morning of the show!

ENTERING THE SHOW...

Generally, your entry should be received by the entry clerk **2-3 weeks before the show**. Check the entry information for an exact entry date and where to send your entry and payment. **Payment and entries must be received in advance and are non-refundable.** This assures the show committee that you will be present and helps them in planning.

On the entry form, you will be asked for your name, address and phone number, the cat's name, it's parents (if known), birthdate, color, registration number (if you are showing a registered cat) and sex. You should indicate if you want a single cage or double cage. Most cages are double ones (Usually 22X22X45, but check the show flyer for measurements.) and come with dividers. You automatically receive *a single cage with each entry*. Most people entering one cat will pay for the double cage because it gives their cat more room and keeps them further away from other animals.

THE DAY BEFORE THE SHOW...

Time for final preparations. Most people will bathe their cat on this day. If you are showing a purebred cat, it is helpful to contact the breeder and ask about their bathing and grooming regime. Clip the cat's claws, clean its ears and remove any staining. Pack your show bag.

TYPICAL SUPPLIES TO TAKE:

Food & Litter:

- Food & Water Dishes
- Food (dry, canned & treats)
- Catnip
- Litter Box & Litter

Cage Curtains:

- Top, Bottom, Sides
- Cage Clips, Safety Pins, Twist Ties
- Cat Beds

Cage Decorations:

- Photos
- Cattery Nameplate
- Breed Info/Displays

Grooming:

- Comb
- Q-Tips
- Scissors
- Nail Clippers
- Face Cloth
- Coat Gloss or Anti-Static Mixture
- Lint Brush
- Grooming Stand

Paperwork:

- Pen
- Registration Papers
- Confirmation Forms
- Health Papers
- Directions to Show, Hotel

In case of emergency:

- Shampoo
- Blowdryer
- Deodorizer
- Disinfectant
- Towels

It really helps to make a list and check it twice.

THE DAY OF THE SHOW...

Check-in - The entry clerk will be close to the door to give you your catalog and check in your entry. That person will show you the benching chart that indicates where your assigned cage is located. Go to that portion of the show hall and set up your cage. Plan to arrive during the first 15 minutes of check-in. By arriving early, you are giving your kitty time to acclimate to the sights and sounds of the show hall, plus give yourself time to set up.

Transport kitty to the show in a carrier, preferably with paper towels, a bed or cloth towel inside in case kitty has an "accident." If it's cold outside, cover the outside of the carrier with a blanket or towel to prevent kitty from getting a chill, but don't over heat.

Don't be concerned about kitty wanting to hide under the bed or crying. Be calm and reassuring. Let kitty sit in your lap. If kitty calms down, you might want to walk through the show hall (away from the judging rings) and let kitty look at the other cats (Not too close - remember, they might spook too.), people and objects. Giving kitty this special time to satisfy his curiosity can help a great deal.

Pull out your catalog and locate your cat's entry number. This number is probably on a cage on the cage or may be listed on the front of your catalog. If not, locate the classification for your cat (kitten, adult, alter, HHP) and go through the entries one by one until you find your cat. Check to see that the information printed on the page is correct. If not, you need to see the master clerk and make corrections. **This is very important!** Ask your neighbor or the entry clerk where the master clerk is located. When you make the corrections, be sure to ask the master clerk if the judges will receive the correction, or if you need to tell the clerk in each ring. If you catch a

correction **before** judging starts, it generally is announced to the entire show hall (along with the absent cats and other changes) and the judges will have it in their books. If you are showing a registered cat, it is helpful to bring a copy of the registration certificate in case there are questions.

Go through the catalog and locate the **finals** page and other information about the Association, other shows, etc. You will find the judging schedule, usually on the back cover or inside back cover. This tells you which ring you are going to first and in what order your cat will visit the other rings.

If you haven't already done so, introduce yourself to your neighboring exhibitors. Remember that they need time to set up, so don't bother them when they are working, but offer to help lift a cage or move a carrier if needed. Tell them this is your first show (or second or whatever) and ask about their kitties. Maybe they'll offer to answer any questions. Regardless, if you do have a question about something regarding the show, ask anyway. If they don't know or are too busy, you can go to the entry clerk or ask someone in the check-in area.

Most new exhibitors are nervous and excited and transmit those feelings to their cats. You need to remain calm and relaxed. It's okay to be excited, but take a few deep breaths, particularly before you pick up your kitty and try to be as calm as possible. When your entry number is called, take kitty to the appropriate judging cage and place him inside.

There are chairs by every ring for exhibitors and spectators. Have a seat and watch the judging.

When judging is completed, your cat's number is turned face downward on the cage and you can take kitty back to

the benching cage. Sometimes there are several exhibitors doing this at the same time. Hold back and let the other exhibitors go first, particularly if you only have 1 or 2 cats entered in the show and don't have to get to another ring. This is show etiquette and simple politeness. Some exhibitors may have four or more entries and may be rushing from ring to ring, especially if they are showing in more than one class. Besides, when taking cats to and from the ring, it's very easy for the cats to come face to face with each other and upset kitties. Be patient and wait.

After the judging comes **FINALS**. That's when the judge picks his top cats. You will hear the announcer calling, "Finals in Ring ____ Check your numbers." You need to go to that ring and see if your cat's number is on a cage. If so, get kitty and put him in that cage. Write down your finals in your catalog. When finals are completed, you can pick up kitty and, if you wish, ask the judge to sign the ribbon.

CONGRATULATIONS!

This procedure continues throughout the day in every ring. **Be sure not to leave the show hall until all of the rings and finals have been conducted.** Sometimes your cat will be judged in two rings before finals are called in the first ring. It all depends on the schedule. Schedules change, so be alert.

Be a gracious winner and good loser. Meet new friends and have fun!

SO YOU WANT TO SHOW YOUR CAT



Guidelines to showing from the American Cat Fanciers Association

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