



STRAW FOR OUTDOOR PAWS

Use the right bedding for outdoor shelters

If you're caring for community cats, it's important to provide a weatherproof shelter with the right kind of bedding inside. The choice of bedding can make the difference between a cold cat and a cozy one.

WHAT TO USE:

- ✓ **Straw is the best option.** It repels moisture and traps heat (vital in colder climates, which require bedding with more insulating properties). Find straw at most home supply and gardening stores and replace it annually or more often as needed.
- ✓ **Shredded newspaper** is an acceptable alternative in more temperate or arid climates. Check it frequently and after any rain, and replace it if wet.
- ✓ **Heated pet beds** rated for outdoor use work if you have an accessible and safe electrical outlet.
- ✓ **Self-warming pet pads** absorb and hold heat; they don't require electricity but do need to be kept dry.



WHAT NOT TO USE:

- ✗ **Hay** resembles straw, but it soaks up moisture, becomes moldy and can cause allergic reactions in cats.
- ✗ **Blankets, towels and cloth pet beds** attract and retain moisture and may even freeze.
- ✗ **Folded newspaper or cardboard** on the floor of the shelter draws away body heat.

The HSUS's Krista Rakovan replaces the straw in cat shelters before winter sets in.

→ For more community cat care tips, visit [humanesociety.org/outdoor-cats](https://www.humanesociety.org/outdoor-cats).