

## Massachusetts Institute of Technology Undergraduate Housing Cat Policy

For health and safety purposes, as well as courtesy to neighbors, the cat owner (referred to hereafter as "Owner" or "the Owner") agrees to the following terms and conditions in maintaining a cat in MIT undergraduate student housing.

### Article I - General

1. Cats are only allowed in areas (referred to hereafter as "cat-friendly areas") of East Campus, Senior House, Bexley Hall, and Random Hall specified by and on file in the Housing Office. Each dorm so designated shall choose a Pet Chair and file the name and contact information of the Pet Chair with the Housing Office before any cats shall be allowed in the dorm.
2. Owner shall maintain only one cat in student housing and only in cat-friendly areas.
3. Owner must have the consent of all floor-mates. Owner must have the written consent of all roommates and suite-mates. Other residents of a cat-friendly floor are assumed to give implied consent unless they explicitly tell the Pet Chair otherwise.
4. If at anytime a resident of a cat-friendly area requests removal of a cat due to health reasons by making the request in writing to the house manager, housemaster or Housing Office, the cat must be removed from that particular area of the house. The cat may be relocated to another cat-friendly area, as long as the Cat Policy is not violated.

### Article II - Responsibilities of Cat Owners

#### Section I - Registration Process

1. Before bringing a cat into student housing, the Owner must receive approval from the Housing Office as evidenced by issuance of a cat approval number. This approval can be obtained by submitting the cat approval form in the appendix of this policy to the Pet Chair, who will forward the form to the Housing Office. Cat approval remains in effect, if it is not revoked, until the owner moves out of the cat-friendly area where she currently resides.
2. Within two weeks of bringing a cat onto campus, the Owner must submit the cat registration form to her dorm's Pet Chair along with a picture of the cat and a written statement from a licensed veterinarian certifying that:
  - The cat is up to date on FIV, FeLV, rabies, and distemper vaccinations, and
  - the cat is spayed or neutered, or
  - the cat is too young to be spayed or neutered.

If the cat is too young to be spayed or neutered, the veterinarian should specify a date by which it should be spayed or neutered.

3. Only one cat may be registered per cat approval number issued by the Housing Office.
4. Owner may transfer the registration of a cat to another student by submitting the cat registration transfer form to her dorm's Pet Chair. Housing Office approval will be required for transfer of registration only if the new owner of the cat does not reside in the same cat-friendly area as the former owner.
5. If the Owner has a change of suite-mates or roommates, the new roommates and suite-mates must sign a roommate consent form. The Owner must provide the completed form to the Pet Chair within one week after getting a new roommate or suite-mate.

## Section II - Care of Cat

1. Owner shall have the cat neutered or spayed as soon as it is old enough, and will keep the cats FIV, FeLV, rabies, and distemper vaccinations up to date. Owner shall provide the Pet Chair with up to date health records, including the status of vaccinations and spaying or neutering.
2. Owner shall provide proper care for the cat including regular feeding and grooming.
3. Owner shall have the cat wear an identifying collar tag at all times carrying the pet's name and the Owner's MIT email address.

## Section III - General Responsibilities

1. Food and water containers and litter boxes are not to be left in common areas (hallways, kitchens, etc.) They must be maintained in the Owner's own room. If these items are found in areas other than the Owner's room, they will be disposed of by the Housing Office.
2. Owner shall not permanently alter room doors, windows, or walls to allow for cat entry or exit.
3. Owner shall inform the Pet Chair and Housing Office immediately to update cat registration files in the event of a housing location change.

## Article III - Liability, Enforcement and Sanctions

1. Owner is responsible for the behavior of her cat. Should the cat cause personal injury to any person or persons on MIT property, the Owner shall be liable for compensation of the victim(s) claims. Owner remains so liable as long as the cat is registered under the Owner's name.
2. Students are responsible for ensuring their own compliance with the current pet policy.
3. Owner is financially responsible for ALL damages caused by the cat. Damages include, but are not limited to:

Damages to institute property  
Damages to other students' property  
Cleaning made necessary by the cat  
Flea extermination

4. The registered Owner of a cat remains financially responsible for damages caused by her cat on MIT property until she officially transfers the registration to another person.

5. In cases involving damage to institute property, the house manager shall determine liability for damages and assess fines for these damages. The house manager may assign the dorm Judicial Committee the responsibility for determining liability for damage.

6. In cases where multiple cats share an area of the dorm and it cannot be determined which cat or cats caused damage, all owners who have cats in that living area shall split the cost of repairing the damage.

7. The Judicial Committee, House Manager, or Housing Office may order the removal of a cat under any one or more of the following conditions:

The Judicial Committee, House Manager, or Housing Office receives complaints from dorm residents of the living area.

The conditions stated in this policy are not met.

The Housing Office custodial or maintenance staff complain of cleanliness problems or damage to Institute property.

8. Breaches of this policy not sufficient to warrant immediate removal of the cat will cause the Owner to be subject to the following sanctions issued by the Judicial Committee, House Manager or Housing Office.

1<sup>st</sup>: A warning letter, explaining the nature of the breach in policy.

2<sup>nd</sup>: A warning letter, again explaining the nature of the breach in policy, and notifying the Owner that a continued breach will lead to removal of the cat from Institute housing and revocation of the Owner's privilege to maintain a cat in student housing.

3<sup>rd</sup>: Permanent removal of the cat from Institute housing.

9. No student who has been forced to remove a cat from Institute housing due to any violation of this policy shall be allowed to have another cat in Institute housing at any future time. If a cat registration is revoked, the Housing Office will send a notice to the Owner and the pet chair of her dorm.

#### Article IV - Miscellaneous

1. City animal control and licensing laws apply on campus.

2. The Owner shall be responsible for reporting any pre-existing damage to the dorm area where her cat will be living.

3. The House Manager may require a dorm to get a new pet chair if, under the House Manager's judgement, the pet chair is not properly fulfilling her job.

4. Students who own cats with current registration under the previous MIT cat policy must receive approval for and register their cats under this policy. Until March 31, 2004, the housing office will give approval to own a cat to such students upon receipt of properly completed cat approval forms. Until March 31, 2004, such students may continue to keep in cat-friendly areas cats not approved by the housing office under this policy but registered under the previous policy. On and after April 1, 2004, all cats on campus must be approved by the housing office under this policy.

5. The Housing Office may specify any additional regulations and restrictions pertaining to cats in undergraduate dorms. These changes will be posted to the official copy of the Cat Policy on the Dormcon website or in the standards and procedures for students. The housing office will notify cat Owners thirty days before changes in the Cat Policy are implemented. The current official version of this policy will always be posted at <http://web.mit.edu/dormcon/pets/>

#### Article V - Responsibilities of the Pet Chair

The Pet Chair shall :

1. Register herself with the Housing Office as the designated Pet Chair of her dorm.
2. Obtain blank copies of forms and extra copies of the Cat Policy.
3. Distribute necessary forms and the Cat Policy to known cat owners.
4. Post the Cat Policy for ALL residents of her dorm.
5. Check that all forms received are properly completed. (This may require checking that all affected residents of the area surrounding the cat Owner have agreed.) Deliver forms to authorized Housing Office official for approval.
6. Return copies of approved and rejected approval forms to the students who submitted the forms. Maintain complete copies of all forms, including the attached documents, in her files.
8. Maintain files of status of cat's health (spayed/neutered, shots received, etc.) Follow-up on any cats that have not been spayed/neutered as of registration or are due for booster immunizations.
9. Provide copies of records to the House Manager, Housemaster, and Housing Office as appropriate. Upon receipt of a completed cat registration or cat registration transfer form, copies of the form should be forwarded to the House Manager, Housemaster and Housing Office. Upon receipt of a completed cat approval form, copies of the should be forwarded to the House Manager and Housemaster. Records should be provided promptly after a request

from the House Manager, Housemaster or Housing Office.

10. Keep a file of past complaints, fines levied, etc, in regards to all cats in the building.

11. Before leaving the office of pet chair, transfer all records to the incoming Pet Chair.

12. Possess and have read the current versions of the cat and pet policies.

## Appendix A - FAQ

Disclaimer: This section is meant to answer common questions. It is NOT official policy.

Where is the official policy?

The current version of the full policy can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/dormcon/www/pets/policy.html>. Other rules concerning pets can also be found in the Standards and Procedures for Students.

Why are cats only allowed in four dorms?

MIT has a commitment to provide safe housing for its students. This includes health safety. Many students have allergies or other reasons not to live near cats, and we want them to be able to find housing that suits their needs.

Why those specific dorms?

DormCon spoke with the house managers and residents of each dorm during IAP and Spring of 2000, and it was determined that Bexley, EC, Senior House, and Random had higher cat populations than other dorms and pets were a larger element of their culture. This decision was also based on the willingness of the house manager to manage and support the policy.

Why only cats? What about other pets?

Fish are allowed in both cat and non-cat dorms. Cats are the only animals allowed under this policy because we want to limit the number of people with allergies that will be affected by the presence of the pets. Also, it will be very easy to tell if a cat is being cared for properly, whereas it is more difficult to see if a hamster or iguana is. Institute housing is a privilege, not a right; it is up to the individual student to weigh her options; which is more important to her -- having a pet other than those allowed or living on campus?

What if I bring a pet, either a cat or something else, to a non-cat dorm?

If discovered, you will be asked to remove the animal from Institute housing within a reasonable period of time.

What if I live in a cat dorm and I had a cat last year that I want to bring back?

See the registration procedure.

What if I live in a non-cat dorm, but I want to bring my cat back?

You will need to move to a cat-friendly area of a dorm. Spaces are limited, so you need to act quickly. Contact the Pet Chair of the dorm you are interested in and see if they have

reached their limit of cats for the year. Then check with the Room Assignment Chair of that dorm to see if you can move in. You are not guaranteed a move even if the dorm has space. You will have to file a dorm-to-dorm transfer form with the Housing Office, and you will have no priority over other students to move.

What are some things I can do to ensure the continuation of this program?

If you see an illegal cat in your building, talk to it's owner and remind them of the repercussions for everyone if their cat becomes a problem or is caught. If that doesn't convince them to remove the cat or to switch to a different dorm, go to your house's JudComm and Pet Chair and report the cat. They will be prepared to deal with these issues in a fair way. The same goes for other pets. Even though smaller animals may be confined to a resident's room, they may be found accidentally when a repairman is fixing something in the room, etc.

What should I do if I believe the pet chair is not properly doing her job?

First, contact the pet chair; she is probably willing to address your complaints. Next, check your dorms policies. There may be procedures to address your problem. (Through JudComm, etc.) If all else fails, contact your house manager. If the house manager believes that the pet chair is not fulfilling her duties, the house manager can require that the dorm replace the pet chair.

What should I do if I have a complaint about a cat?

First contact the owner of the cat. See if you can work out a solution to your problem. If that fails, contact the pet chair of the dorm; she can act as a mediator to help reach a solution. If the previous two steps don't fix the problem, contact the dorm's JudComm. Finally, if no solution is found through JudComm, talk to the House Manager.

Where can I get my cat neutered, spayed, or vaccinated?

Where can I find Cambridge animal control and licensing laws?

[http://bpc.iserver.net/codes/cbridge/\\_DATA/Title\\_6/index.html](http://bpc.iserver.net/codes/cbridge/_DATA/Title_6/index.html)

Who do I contact if I have questions about this policy?

Contact your dorm's Pet Chair, if applicable. If he or she cannot answer your question, contact the Housing Office.

Appendix B - Approval, Roommate Consent, Registration, and Transfer of Registration Forms