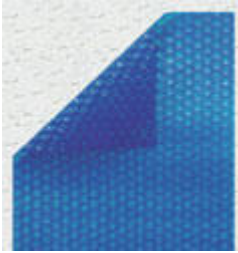


# Feral cat winter shelter ideas

<http://www.pacthumanesociety.org/core/WinterShelter.htm>

## Solar heating



What a stroke of genius! **Debbie Peterson** of the Chicagoland Stray Cat Coalition uses **solar pool covers/blankets** to keep her ferals warm during winter. Solar pool covers are used to attract and retain heat from the sun, to keep water in swimming pools warm. Debbie saw them as a way to upgrade her feral cat houses to solar energy! On a 10°F night the temperature inside could easily reach 70°F! Torn but usable solar pool covers can be found curbside on suburban garbage pick-up days. Purchased new, prices vary based on construction and thickness. A 15 mil premium-grade 12' round blanket costs \$32. Cut them with standard household scissors. Drape one over your feral cat house silver-side down, and the purring will start. **Aim for full exposure to the south.** Check the temperature until you know how much heat is generated; it may become too warm inside on milder days! Consider setting up a solar feeding station a distance from the

sleeping area.

## Fast & Functional

This innovative idea, costing around \$15-20, comes to us from a feral cat caregiver in Villa Park, IL. Finding one plastic bin to fit inside another is the most challenging part of this project. The larger bin was \$6, the smaller was \$4. A 4x8 sheet of Styrofoam insulation costs about \$7, and is enough for 2 shelters with some left over.



Consider surrounding your cats' shelter with bails of straw. Did you know that **straw is a fabulously efficient insulator**? Homes insulated with 18" wide bails of straw could save 75% on heating & cooling costs. Just think what that could do for your cats!

**Place shelters where they will be protected from wind and snow drifts -- particularly those without protective flaps over the door(s) -- otherwise snow could blow in and bury/trap the cats.** If there are fixed objects, such as buildings in your feral cat shelter area, pay attention to the way the winds tend to circulate, and place the shelters where there is the least amount of blowing & drifting snow. This could be a lifesaver, particularly for those who endure extreme winter weather, in which roads may be impassable for 1-2 days.

Depending on predators and other animals/hazards in your area, some cats may not use shelters unless there are two exits -- one for them to sneak out should another unwanted animal enter. Consider an emergency exit with a flap that opens from the inside only.

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