

Black Cat Found Covered in White Latex Paint

Reward offered for suspected cruelty.

A \$1,000 reward is being offered for information about a black cat that was found covered head-to-toe in white paint in Pittsburgh.

The Animal Rescue League of Western Pennsylvania scrubbed off most of the white latex paint after several attempts to clean the 1-year-old cat, named Betsy, who was said to be friendly but uncomfortable because the paint was pulling her fur when she moved.

The organization also believes that Betsy has a litter of kittens somewhere because she is lactating, and is asking anyone who might know about the kittens or any possible abuse to step forward.

We think it was intentional because of the extent of the coverage, said shelter spokesman Mark Berton.

Animal control officers picked up Betsy on Feb. 16 after someone reported the cat was in trouble.

Rescue workers were able to clean off the paint using a combination of dish detergent and pumice soap although as of Friday they were letting the cat rest for awhile with a few areas still painted, including a stiffened tail. The first cleaning attempt with just dish soap did not work well, and workers had discussed using a nontoxic paint remover before trying the soap combination, Berton said. If all else had failed, they would have shaved Betsy, and still may do so with her tail.

The reward for information leading to an animal-cruelty conviction initially was \$500, but increased as pet lovers called in to help. Anyone with information is asked to call (412) 321-4625, extensions 216 or 219.

Posted: Feb. 21, 2006, 3 p.m. EST