

Shelter Seeks Supplies After Feline Distemper Outbreak

At least 21 cats succumbed to virus; shelter to stay shut until mid-October.

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The Somerset Regional Animal Shelter in Bridgewater, N.J., is expected to be closed until Oct. 16 because of a feline distemper outbreak that killed 21 cats.

The shelter is seeking donations of bleach and fresh linens for staff to clean the cat quarters. The shelter also needs canned cat food, according to Melissa Neiss, the shelter's senior animal control officer.

Feline distemper, also known as cat fever, is a highly contagious viral disease common in kennels, pet shops and shelters where cats are grouped together. Of the cats that died, one was an adult; the rest were kittens.

The shelter serves the New Jersey towns of Manville, Bridgewater and Somerville. While it's being cleaned, new cats that arrive are being sent to a foster home network.

For more information, contact the Somerset Regional Animal Shelter at (908) 725-0308.