

Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) - CATS

The JSPCA provide a 24/7 animal ambulance service and are often the ones who have to deal with the difficult call from both the member of the public who finds a dead cat and a distraught owner who has reported their cat missing. In 2019 we had to deal with 76 RTA's involving cats, 2020 was significantly less at 58 and between January and July this year we have seen 32 cases.

Sometimes owners can be searching for days before the body of the cat is discovered. Not knowing is extremely stressful for the cat owner and we believe that if accidents are reported we can recover the body and give the family closure. Unfortunately, not everyone is passionate about animals and would not consider the impact on the animal or the owner who consider their pet part of the family. If the requirement to report cat RTA's is made law, with subsequent consequences should they not, more accidents will be reported at the time of the incident and we believe this could in fact save a cat's life.

After an RTA, animals often go into shock. We can stabilise this using intravenous fluids, oxygen therapy and medications including pain killers. Another immediate risk is swelling of the brain due to head trauma – this is easier to treat if caught early. Emergency treatment at an earlier stage will give a better chance of survival.

Even if the cat appears to be fine and there are no outward signs of injury, internal bleeding, ruptured organs, bruised/punctured lungs and broken bones can cause problems that aren't always obvious first-off. If the cat runs off following an RTA it is still important to contact the JSPCA in order that we can leaflet the area with a description of the cat in order that owners can check their cat.

We have had a case very recently where someone reported that they had been involved in an RTA with a cat but it had run off. We put leaflets through the doors of a number of houses in the area and an owner came forward to say that their cat, which matched the description, had been acting strange so they took it to the vet who reported it had a head trauma, which they were able to treat.

We are also fortunate to have contact with the Jersey Cat Search group who are very active in helping people search for cats and we can share information with the group to assist finding an injured cat.

The JSPCA feels that the changes to the road traffic law should come into force as soon as possible.

Debra D'Orleans

CEO JSPCA