

Sample “Informed Consent Letter” that can be used by a Veterinarian when obtaining permission from a feline owner for an advanced emergency medical technician student to perform an intubation.

Dear Cat Owner,

Your cat will soon undergo a veterinary surgical procedure in our facility. As is customary in our practice, a breathing tube will be inserted into your cat’s windpipe to protect its airway during general anesthesia. We are asking your permission to allow a student advanced emergency medical technician to assist us in inserting this tube under our immediate, personal supervision.

Advanced emergency medical technicians, often called paramedics, provide life-saving treatment to critically ill and injured human patients before they reach the hospital. In the course of their work, they must sometimes insert a breathing tube into the airway to provide oxygen to the brain, heart, and lungs. They learn this skill in adult patients in hospital operating rooms under the immediate, personal supervision of anesthesiologists.

However, the airways of children are much smaller, and shaped differently, than the airways of adults. Moreover, because children seldom require surgery, there are few opportunities to practice inserting a breathing tube properly in pediatric patients.

Fortunately, the airway of a small child is very similar in size and shape to the airway of a cat. For this reason, we are asking your permission to allow a student advanced emergency medical technician to assist us in inserting the breathing tube under our immediate, personal supervision. The New York State Department of Health estimates that this training could save the lives of as many as 200 children each year in New York State.

Authority to conduct this vital training was enacted into New York State Law in 1995 with the support of the New York State Veterinary Medical Society, whose motto is “Caring for Man And Animals.” This type of training has been proven to be entirely safe to the animal involved. Nevertheless, your cat’s participation is entirely voluntary, and will in no way affect the treatment your cat will otherwise receive.

As your veterinarian, my participation in this training program is also entirely voluntary. I have chosen to ask you to allow your cat to participate because the risk to your cat is minimal while the benefit to children and their families is large. Thank you for the time you have taken to read this important letter and your willingness to consider allowing your cat to participate in this training, which could someday save the life of a child.

Sincerely yours,
_____, D.V.M.

I do do not give my consent for my cat to participate.

_____, Owner