

## PREPARATIONS

### *Registration of Your Cat/Kitten*

- The first thing that you must do, whether you intend to simply exhibit your Savannah or enter it for competition in the rings, is make sure that your cat/kitten is registered with TICA.
- TICA will not allow a Savannah (or any hybrid origin new breed) to be exhibited or shown without a registration number.
- Either the breeder will give you the kitten's "blue slip" (litter registration form) or will sign over the registration papers to you if he/she had already registered the cat/kitten.
  - It is easy to register from the blue slip, just fill out the form and send off with the small amount of fee. It typically takes TICA two weeks to process forms, but if you need the registration number earlier for the show you can call them earlier and ask if it has been processed yet. They can then give you the registration number over the phone. Recently they have been emailing the registration number before mailing the certificate which is a welcome change so make sure your email address is correct on the form!
  - It's also easy to transfer ownership, your breeder has only to sign the back of the Registration Papers for your cat/kitten and you fill out the rest, send it off to TICA with the small fee and it's done!
  - If you are running late and need that registration number ASAP to enter the show, you can send the form with a "rush fee" of \$10 which means it is done within a day of TICA receiving the form. So to expedite further you can Fedex the form overnight also.
- Next, you need to decide on the show venue and date. [www.tica.org](http://www.tica.org) has a show calendar with all the shows they are holding and where and when they are. Find a show near you (or near somewhere you'd like to visit!).

### *Entering Your Cat/Kitten in a Show*

- The online show calendar will have a link to the specific show's webpage. This will either give you online registration or forms to print and mail.
- Often on the show calendar pagewebsite there is an online registration form. That is usually my preference, I can fill it out and send it off immediately and usually I can even paypal the entry fee!
- Otherwise, you will need to fill out a paper form and mpost ail it off with your payment. Either call or email the show entry clerk for an entry form, there is also a generic show entry form on the TICA website that can be used, [http://www.tica.org/members/forms/club/official\\_entry\\_form.pdf](http://www.tica.org/members/forms/club/official_entry_form.pdf).
  - When you are at shows, you will be given lots of show flyers for subsequent shows. These include the entry forms a lot of the time, which makes it easier if you don't like dealing with online entries.
- Please see attachment of a sample show entry form showing you how you MIGHT fill it out (at end of article)
  - If you want to take along a buddy for your show cat, it is possible. You can enter a cat for Exhibition Only, which means it sits in the cage with your show cat but doesn't go to the rings. This cat can be another Savannah (F3 onwards, or you can write for special permission to bring an F1 or F2 from the show manager), another breed, or even a household pet. You can see the field to circle "exhibit only" in the sample form in the "All Cats" section and "Catalog" subsection in the upper left corner of the form.need a link to showing as HHP page here
  - Remember you could also show your household pet in a different class to your Savannah! Two cats are allowed in a double cage, and you will want a double cage anyway, as a single cage is a little small unless you show in Southern California where their standard cage is about the same size as a double cage in other regions. In my opinion, there is not enough room for litterbox, kitty bed and dishes in a single cage, so either order the extra half cage or enter another cat. Cage dimensions will be specified on the show flyer so please take note.
  - You will probably see a note on the TICA Summary Sheet whether it is online or paper that asks for your "benching preferences" or says "benching request". If you are not showing at a Savannah-Rama show, you should complete this. It tells the entry clerk who you want to sit by. If you have a friend that you know will be showing, you can enter that friend's last name in the "Benching request". It is always fun to bench next to other Savannah owners., you can put "Savannah owners please" in this area. But, if you think that no one else is showing a Savannah at a given show, and a friend is showing a different breed, feel free to request benching near that friend. Especially at your first show, having a friend or someone with experience near you really helps. At Savannah-Rama shows, we are all benched together, so this is not a pressing concernyou would put "Savannah-Rama" in this section.
- Along with the Individual Entry Form, you submit the Summary Form which will ask you if you want something like a "grooming space". Although this is particularly important if you have a longhaired cat as you will need to be continually combing and fluffing their coat, it is also very nice to have that extra space to put out educational material on Savannahs, or your cattery cards and photo albums.
- Once you have sent in the forms and payment, you should receive a receipt form in the mail (or email if you processed an online

form), with all the details as they will be listed in the show catalogue. You need to check that your cat is listed correctly, and contact the show entry clerk if there is any mistake(s).

### **Shopping for Supplies**

- Then you need to go shopping for show supplies! You will need:
  - o A show cage is not essential, the show entry includes use of a wire cage, but some exhibitors prefer to bring their own show cage... [www.sturdiproducts.com](http://www.sturdiproducts.com) is a popular choice.
  - o Some If you will use the provided wire cage, then you are required to cover three sides and the top of the cage with fabric, so you will need to source some fabric for your show curtains...5 yards should be sufficient.
    - You could also find show curtains already made by someone else. An online search will yield websites retailing show curtains in a variety of styles and designs. Ebay sometimes has really good deals – [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)
  - o Some office binder clips (3/4" wide is good). These are great for clipping all sorts of things together J
  - o Can't hurt to take some safety pins either, you just never know!
  - o Zip ties are great for securing cages...Savannahs can be very resistant to being caged! You need to find the ones that are refastenable or else bring a number that you can cut off each time you need to.
  - o Some people prefer a padlock to secure their cage for safety. Either use a combination lock or make sure you have a pocket to carry the keys with you and don't lose them!
  - o Scissors for on-site tailoring of show curtains...
  - o A bathmat or dog blanket (I found a black cream faux fur sheepskin one that I like) to line the floor of the show cage. You can contact the show clerk to find out the size of the cages if it is not anywhere on the online flyer. Paler colors work better to make your kitty easier to view by spectators.
  - o A small litter tray, unless your kitty is really not going to cope with a less than large one
  - o Litter scoop, and small brush & dustpan
  - o Couple of bBowls for food and water
  - o Pictures for display on top of the cage, or in any additional space you purchase, photo albums too.
  - o Toys &/or treats that your kitty prefers. I really love the freeze-dried chicken pieces you can get, as they love them and are so good for them and so do most cats. Catnip can really help a stressed kitty. A short wand toy you can use to play with them in the smaller confines of the show cage.
  - o Nail clippers, for if you forget to trim their nails the day before the show. Claws must be clipped very short for the show, front and back paws please.
  - o Baby wipes, and cleaning wipes, paper towels, and pet odor eliminator/cleaner for emergencies.
  - o Antistatic spray, there are ones made for cats. Alternatively a previously used dryer sheet can help reduce static on a cat if the showhall is very dry.
  - o Couple of photos in frames for the top of the cage, &/or a photo album of your other furbabies
  - o Hand sanitizer, in case you worry about strangers passing germs to your kitten/cat. Be aware that this does not prevent your cat from getting germs, and you should still bathe your cat on return home just to be sure.
  - o Q-tips and cotton balls, in case you forgot to clean those BIG SV ears!
  - o Water, handcream, hand sanitizer, breath mints/chewing gum...for your comfort...show halls are dry environments and you may talk to LOTS of people.
  - o Business cards, especially if you are intending breeding your Savannah.
  - o "Do Not Touch" sign for cage. You will be surprised how many people think it acceptable to open up the cage to pet your cat. Also a sign for the top or front of the cage with your Cattery name or Cat's name is very nice.
  - o Big bag to put all of this in! A large plastic bin might also be used, especially if driving not flying to the show.
  - o Of course a cat carrier to bring your cat to and from the showhall, it can also be used to take your cat to the ring if they are particularly wriggly.

### Preparing your Kitten

- Weeks before the date of the show, start practicing with your kitten/cat.
  - Keep picking him/her up and holding up in front of you, stretching the torso out and looking at the face etc. None of this is normal for your kitty so it is good to try to get them accustomed to the strange poses.
  - Get other people (family, friends, postman) to do the same with your kitten/cat
  - Be sure to act matter-of-fact when doing this, as if this is normal and the cat should not be nervous about it. Your attitude will always affect the way they react. Especially at the show.
  - Invite people over so that your kitten/cat gets used to different people and groups of people.
  - Take your kitten/cat with you to places like the pet store so that they get more accustomed to being in a strange different places.
  - If you can, taking your kitten to a show when it is just old enough to enter the showhall (3 months) for exhibition only, but not old enough for the show ring (4 months) is really great experience for them. They get to experience the hustle and bustle of the showhall without the additional stress of the showing.

### Travel plans

- If you are traveling by plane to the location of the show:
  - The week leading up to the show you may need to take your kitten/cat to the vet for a health certificate. Some airlines require you to have this health certificate, so check with the airline that you book with.
  - **If you are flying there, and wish your kitty to travel with you in cabin, then you need to book your kitten/cat at the same time as your fare.** There is a limit to the number of cats allowed in the cabin on a plane, so you need to make sure that there would be room. On some airlines it can be as little as one cat in First class and two in Economy class. This means that you will have to call the airline to book, or reserve the flight online and then call before you buy that fare... just to make sure you can take your cat/kitten on that particular flight.
  - **You also need to book your cat in if it is to travel as “checked baggage” in cargo instead.**
  - There is an extra charge for having a pet on the flight with you. As of April 2011, the average charge was \$80-100.00 each way, in addition to your fare, for two sample airlines (JetBlue & Virgin America). Check with the airline you book with how much it will be, as this charge may change vary.
  - You will need a carrier that will fit under the seat in front of you on the plane, the softer sided carriers are better for this than hard carriers. Your airline's website will often have the dimensions that will be appropriate. <http://sleepypod.com/air> and [www.sturdiprducts.com](http://www.sturdiprducts.com) sell carriers that I recommend for air travel.
  - You will need to pack cleanup supplies in a pocket of your carry-on bag carrier: paper towels, plastic bags, pet shampoo wipes (or baby wipes), and possibly another rug for inside the carrier. You never know when there might be an “accident”, especially if there is a flight delay. You can often fit all that in the pocket of the carrier bag.
  - If you have a few hours stopover somewhere consider squeezing into your personal bag a disposable litterbox and gallon ziplock bag of litter for your kitty. You can exit the airport and give them a little walk and toilet break before re-entering and getting on the next flight.
  - You will need a cat walking jacket that fits your kitten/cat. It is much safer and easier to take your cat through the bag search area if you have this on them... as the carrier must be x-rayed and you will want to take your kitten/cat with you through the metal detector. Usually the small metal ring of the jacket and metal clasp of the leash do not set off the metal detectors at airports. But a great alternative is to use a bootlace instead of the leash.
  - Some over-vigilant airport staff may suggest you should take off the jacket. Assure them that it will not set off the detector and that it is for safety that you leave the walking jacket on. A wiggly kitten is VERY hard to keep a secure hold on otherwise! You can hook your finger through the loop of the jacket if they insist that you take off the leash, and let them know that they don't want this kitten to be running loose around their airport!
  - **You can also check your cat as baggage.** The fee varies on the airline and your cat will not be with you in the cabin, although it will be in the same plane in a temperature controlled area. The airlines are generally quite good about this and give you a little piece of paper stating your cat is on board (it says something cute like “Don't Worry I Am Here Too” and has your cats name on it. If you choose to do this, be sure you have a hard sided carrier with food and water and that it is big enough for your cat to walk stand and stand turn around in. The down-side of this is that in the event of flight delays, your cat will be stuck in the baggage loading area of the airport which may not be temperature controlled, maybe be loud and frightening, and your cat may be stressed and upset in that situation. Direct flights are even more preferable if your kitty is traveling cargo.
  - If the flight is long you may be required to tape a bag of food to the carrier to be fed along the way. You should check with the airline about the requirements for this.

- o **Should you give your cat drugs to calm it?** In general the answer is no, especially if it will not be in the cabin with you. Studies on the effect of common tranquilizers at altitude have not yielded any proof that the use of these tranquilizers is safe. Additionally there is some data suggesting that the cat is less able to regulate its own body temperature under sedation, therefore is at risk if unattended in cargo. If your vet gives you something, use it with caution and make sure your cat is with you in the cabin. If you use a tranquilizer and your cat is checked as baggage there will be no one attending your cat and no one there to help if something goes wrong. It is usually recommended that you "trial" the tranquilizer once at home before traveling so that you have some idea of how your pet will react with this drug.
  - If your cat tends to be loud, especially when confined, then you may indeed want to consider a tranquilizer. Acepromazine is a commonly prescribed sedative. My vet has suggested that Xanax is preferable and I have had good success with this. My vet does not like Valium and warned of adverse side effects. Always consult your veterinarian before giving any drugs to your cat!
- You could decide on a road trip in the event that the show is within driving distance to the show and show hotel:
  - o You need to pack similar things to the airplane (cleanup supplies etc) but you may choose to use a larger carrier within your car. I sometimes will use a large pet crate designed for a large dog.... It is large enough for a pet bed and a litter box. Or else I use the Sturdiproduct show cage which also has straps at the back that are designed to put the seatbelt through. My cats enjoy the hammock in the Sturdicage as they ride nice and gentle in there!
  - o You may should stop at regular intervals and either give your kitten a little walk or allow it some food and water at certain stops.
  - o You may still want to bring a smaller pet carrier: for when you arrive and check into your hotel and for transport into the show hall.
- If you will be traveling far enough to the show to have to stay at the show hotel rather than travel home every night, then you will need to take supplies with you for use in the hotel room. It's like you need to pack kitty an overnight bag too!
  - o Litter is provided in the show hall, but the night before the show you will be in the hotel and need to bring your own litter and box for then.
  - o Enough food and bottled water for your kitty
  - o Toys to play with, so that your kitten/cat feels more settled and at home. Play is a great stress reliever!
  - o Their favorite kitty bed. I usually take two...one for the hotel room and one for the showcage, so that I don't have to remember to carry it back and forth.
  - o Some hotels will charge a minimal pet deposit. It ranges from \$2550.00 to \$50100.00 and may be refunded when you check out. Some hotels may call it a "nonrefundable pet deposit" which essentially means it is a fee to have your pet stay there.
  - o Shows usually have listed the designated show hotel, but if it is full or you wish for different amenities (room service for example) then online travel websites such as [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com) allow you to specify "pets allowed" to look for a hotel near to a specific address. <http://www.pet-friendly-hotels.net/> is specifically for this purpose.

### **Show Preparation of Your Kitten**

- Savannahs are easy to prepare for a show, as their coats do not require too much attention.
  - o It is up to you if you bathe your cat/kitten the day before the show. Mine are very clean, but I like to get my cats used to bathing as kittens just in case.
  - o Fortunately, most Savannahs are tolerant of being wet, and if you start them early this quickly becomes routine for them.
  - o Clip their nails short the day before the show, this is a show requirement.
- Clean ear wax out, and clean any tear stains they might have. Wipes for both ears and eyes are easily purchased at pet stores and are gentle and appropriate for this use.

## Show Day!!

### Morning Preparations

- Rise early and try to make sure your cat/kitten eats a decent meal. Many cats/kittens find shows stressful (at least the first time) so may not eat for the rest of the day.
- Play with your cat/kitten to try and get rid of excess energy. Savannahs are high energy cats and they will be in a cage for the rest of the day!
- Check them over for dirt and clean up anything that requires it.

### At the Show

- Get to the show in plenty of time to set up your show cage and get your cat/kitten settled. Better to give it time to get used to the environment before you cart him/her around to the show rings....
- When you enter the show hall, find the entry table and let them know your name. and they will give you a show program and should direct you to where your show cage is. Either they will have a list or there will be a schematic drawing there. At the cage location, your name is usually written there on the paper covering of the table so that you know you are at the right place. It will also show you the boundaries of your setup area.!
- **Remember:** Set up your cage with its rug and curtains, cat bed, litter box and food and water dishes BEFORE you put in your cat/kitten(s)! That sounds silly but this mistake does happen!
- Putting up the show cage if you are using the supplied wire cage looks daunting at first but is not as hard as it looks.
  - o Take the wire cage off the table and place to the side for a moment.
  - o Place a short piece of fabric from the table down to the floor at front...this gives you a barrier to store your bags behind during the show.
  - o Put the pet mat/bathmat/rug/piece of fabric that forms the floor of your show cage on the table and replace the wire cage.
  - o When they place the cage on the table the lid is folded down. This allows you to place a piece of fabric around the sides of the cage, covering first one side, around the back of the cage and then the other side of the cage. So three sides are now covered with the front of the cage open/uncovered by fabric.
  - o Then fold back the lid of the cage. Many cages are different, but you can work out how the lid hooks onto the sides to be stable. This can be tricky to work out the first time, so don't be afraid to ask other exhibitors that already have their wire cages set up for help on how to do this step. You may find that you need to use a few binder clips to stabilize it all.
  - o Then put your final piece of fabric over the top of the cage and hanging down the two sides to finish the cage setup. Binder clips can be used to secure to the cage so it doesn't slip off.
  - o Litter will be provided at the show hall, ask at the entry desk for it's location. Of course if you think your kitty is particular in what type of litter he/she would use, then you may choose to bring your own.
  - o Fill the litter tray and place in the cage. Fill dishes with food and water and also place in the cage.
  - o Place your cat bed in the cage, and maybe a toy or two and it is ready for your cat/kitten.
- Settle in your cat/kitten and take a look at your show catalogue.
  - o You will find Savannahs listed in the Advanced New Breed section, usually towards the end of the program.
  - o Your cat/kitten will be listed with a number. Either write it on the back of your hand or commit it to memory for the day! This is the number you will have to listen for.
- This link will take you to aLook at the sample Judging Schedule. The schedule is usually on the back cover, inside either the front or back covers, or on a separate sheet given to you when you enter.
  - o Savannahs are in Advanced New Breed classes as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004/2008
  - o This will be written on the schedule as NB, ANB, ADV...or some other shortened version.
  - o Circle ANB on the schedule whenever it occurs.
  - o You will also see listed the Championship class rings (kitten, cat and alter) and Household Pet classes (kitten and adult).
  - o Each judge in each ring will see all the classes once throughout the day. They stagger the divisions so that all judges aren't asking to see the same class at once!

- o Unfortunately, not all rings run at the same pace, some judges are snappy-fast, some take their time, so during the day it is possible that your class will be called in more than one ring at once. Most of the time the ring clerks keep an eye on the other rings and try to work it out seamlessly.
  - If they happen to be called to two rings at once, take your cat to the first ring called, then let the ring clerk of the next one know that you will be there as soon as the first judge is finished.

***You are Showing!!***

- So then you wait.... Until your class is called. They will announce this but some places do not have great audio systems so you will have to listen very carefully, or else scan the rings throughout the day looking for your number or the ANB set of numbers (551-599).
  - o You can work out if your ring is next by looking at which class of cats is in the ring... for example if household pets (HHPs) are in the ring and your class follows that, then you know to watch for your number when they have handed out the rosettes in that ring.....
  - o They will call the ring as class and/or the numbers that are up... so you will may hear your number or the range of numbers. For example, if your number is 602552, then you will either hear "601551, 602552, 605 555 to ring 5", or or else something like "numbers 601 551 through 605 555 to ring 5". So then you take your cat to ring 5.
  - o You might also hear "Can all Savannahs come to the ANB ring in ring 5 now please" or "Could all Advanced New Breeds come to ring 5 please".
- You cannot walk your cat to the ring on their leash, it is against show rules. They must be carried securely in your arms or in a cat carrier.
- When you get to the ring, there will be a cage with your cat's number placed above the cage. Put your cat into the cage, close the door and leave the ring. Sit in the provided chairs in front of the ring or stand behind (being careful not to block through traffic) and wait for the judge to proceed.
- The judge will take the cats out sequentially, hold them up to look at length of body, spotting pattern, then turn it to look at the face. The judge may put it on the table then and play with your cat/kitten with a toy to give them a good look at the cat. Cats often don't appreciate being made to stay still to be examined so playing on the table is often the best way for the judge to examine the cat. Then they will put your cat/kitten back, clean the table and go on to the next cat/kitten. Once the judge has looked at all the cats/kittens, he/she will mark his/her placings on the official form, then put placings on the cage.
  - o It will depend on the individual judge how much interaction there is in the ring. As we are still in "evaluation" (ie not in Championship class) the judge may ask who the owner of the cat/kitten is and ask you to discuss the cat/kitten's features as compared to the standard. Be prepared to critique your cat, and be able to describe what features you really like and what things you would like to be better or different. <http://www.tica.org/members/publications/standards/sv.pdf> This link will take you to the Savannah Standard so that you can make sure you have studied it! Take a print out with you in case the judge does not have one with them, although unlikely this could happen..
  - o Some judges will tell you what they thought of the cats as they put out the placings. Others will not, if you want to know what they thought, it is not impolite to wait and ask the judge after the ring is over.
  - o Please remember to be respectful of the judges, they have their opinions of your cat and it may not agree with yours. Take it as an outside opinion and do not take it as a personal insult and try to avoid arguing.
- Once the ring is over, or the ring clerk places the cage number on its side or face, then you take your cat/kitten back to its cage. If your cat/kitten won the class, you can take the rosette back too. Some shows give little plaques for placings which will be stuck into the little rosette they hang in the ring. In that case, take only the small plaque and you can stick it to the rosette already hanging on the show cage that you would have gotten at check-in.
  - o Championship rings (kitten, cat and alter) have finals and usually ten rosettes are given per class. New Breed rings are different, and only the BEST of the class is awarded a Merit rosette.
  - o New Breed winners do not accumulate points and do not get titles such as Champion and Supreme Grand Champion.
  - o The New Breed rings are truly about evaluation, educating judges on our breed's status at this point of breed development, and helping us develop our breed. They are not focused on winning first place or truly competing.
- Throughout the day, your cat/kitten's number will be called in all rings, after the last one is over you can take your cat home for the night.
  - o You can leave stuff in the cage overnight, although some people prefer not to leave food and water for the next day, but to refresh it the second day.
- Then you go through the same thing the next day.... But once the last ring for Sunday is over, then you get to pack up the cage and take EVERYTHING home.

**Congratulate yourself and your cat/kitten on a job well done... you are good great ambassadors for the Savannah breed**

***So What Is Different if I am Showing an Earlier Generation (F1 or F2) Kitten/Cat at a Savannah-Rama and the Fun Ring?***

- A Savannah-Rama is a breed exhibition, a grouping of Savannahs at a particular show, designed to introduce the public to the breed and show a number of generations of Savannahs in the one place.
- Early generation (F1 and F2) Savannahs cannot be entered for competition in ANB rings, nor can A- or B-registered Savannahs. During a show hosting a Savannah-Rama there will be an unofficial "fun ring" where all generations and codes of Savannahs can be judged.
- The Fun ring usually costs an extra \$10 per ring, this is in addition to the standard entry and cage fees. When exhibiting at a Savannah-Rama but not showing in ANB, you will only enter your cat as "exhibition only" hence likely will pay a lower entry fee for this reason. Automatically, any Savannah will be eligible for the Fun Ring.
- You don't need to wait for rings to be called all day.
  - There will be only one ring for you, the Fun Ring and it is what it is called.... FUN!
  - It's often held at lunchtime or the end of the judging day, when a ring of the show hall is free and the judge is free to have FUN!
- If you are worried about them struggling out of your hands, you can bring them to the Fun Ring in a walking jacket with leash, so you always have them safe.
- You can also bring them to the showing in their carrier if that is easier.
  - Another tip is to get a friend or fellow exhibitor to walk in front and clear a path to make it less stressful for your kitty. Just please be considerate of all the exhibitors there and don't make a scene out of this!
- You will be the only one that has to handle your cat/kitten, so if they are nervous they will be more secure in your hands. The judge will understand that these are experienced show kitties and may feel happier with you handling them.
- You can stand by the cage during the fun ring if you feel that will settle your cat more.
- If you feel your cat is too unsettled after bringing him/her to the ring, leave him/her in the show cage and get the Judge to examine and talk about him/her from the cage.
- You get to tell the Judge and the audience all about your cat.
- Remember, the judge is specifically chosen for their love of Savannahs J
- During the show days, while other people are running their cats to rings, you can stay at your show cage and talk to people
  - Savannahs create a lot of excitement, so there will be lots of people wanting to know more about your cat/kitten and Savannahs in general.
- And then of course, you get to meet other Savannah Owners and Enthusiasts!

**You are also a wonderful Ambassador for the Savannah Breed**

