



Shani is a young, spayed tortoiseshell tabby with perfect litter box manners. She's very soft, affectionate and available for adoption from the Virden Pet Network. See pictures and video online at <http://geocities.com/virdenpetnet> or call 748 6677.

### **The Accident Prone Cat**

John recently gave away his family's pet cat because of "accidents" around the house.

"I don't understand it, he was such a good kitten. Then when he got bigger he started peeing on everything. So we had to get rid of him."

More cats are given up by their owners because of urinary issues than for any other reason. But when a cat gets this very basic bodily function wrong, there's usually a reason.

As male cats grow up, they become territorial creatures who have an instinctive drive to mark what they consider their turf. If they sense a female in heat in the area, they will spray vertical surfaces both indoors and out.

Neutering your cat at an early age (6 months or younger) will help prevent him from spraying as an adult.

Urinating outside the litter box is different problem entirely.

Cats are impeccably clean creatures who may object to using the same litter box as other felines. Standard rule of thumb: one litter box per cat, plus one extra. So if you have two cats, there should be three litter boxes preferably not too close to each other and scooped out every day.

Other possible causes of mishaps are urinary crystals, bladder stones or urinary tract infections. The cat may stop using the litter box because he or she associates it with the discomfort felt when urinating.

So before punishing or giving up your cat, see your vet to discuss what could be wrong. It may be easy to resolve.