Step by Step Help for Inappropriate Elimination in Cats

(AKA Why is my cat peeing there and how can I stop the behavior?)

1. Is your cat peeing or pooping (or both) outside the box?
   a. This helps determine if the cat is having an issue with the litter box or pain during urination or defecations
   b. Cats that have a problem with the litter box (not clean enough, in a stressful location, another cat has claimed the box, new litter they don’t like) will pee and poop outside the box
   c. Cats that have pain or discomfort from peeing (infection or cystitis) or pooping (stress diarrhea, constipation, arthritis) will still use the litter box for one elimination but not the other
   d. Once you answer this main question, we can work on determining if there is something physically wrong

2. Do you have enough litter boxes and are they clean enough?
   a. The rule is 1 more box than the number of cats you have
   b. Example: you need at least 5 boxes for 4 cat households
   c. Litter boxes should be spaced throughout the house not all in one room
   d. Are they being cleaned frequently enough
      i. Scoop at least once daily & fully clean boxes and change litter at least every other week
      ii. Would you use a toilet that had not been flushed all day?

3. Are your litter boxes big enough for all your cats?
   a. Traditional litter boxes are too small for most cats
   b. The litter box should be at least 1.5 times the length of your cat
   c. We recommend making your own litter boxes
      i. Under the bed storage boxes
      ii. Cutting holes in large Rubbermaid totes

4. Have there been any major changes in your house
a. New pet (cat or dog)?
   i. New dogs or puppies can cause cats to avoid litter boxes
   ii. Make sure litter boxes are kept in an area that dogs cannot get to
   iii. If you have added a cat, you should have added at least one litterbox

b. New people in the house or someone recently left?
   i. Cats can become stressed by change and stress often leads to changes in litter box habits
   ii. If there has been a change, we strongly recommend using Feliway diffusers

5. Has your cat been recently examined by your regular veterinarian?
   a. Cats with urination issues can have an underlying medical cause
      i. Kidney issues
      ii. Thyroid issues
      iii. Diabetes
      iv. Urinary infection (not common in cats but can occur)
   b. Cats pooping outside the box can have underlying medical issues
      i. Constipation from kidney issues
      ii. Diarrhea from stress colitis
      iii. Arthritis making it difficult for the cat to get to and use the litter box without pain
   c. Your veterinarian can examine and test for these conditions
   d. If there is not underlying medical cause, they can prescribe medicine for stress

6. Links for tips and tricks to retrain your cat to their litterbox

Veterinary Partner has great tips
   http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&S=0&C=0&A=612

Veterinary Cat Specialists Website for owners