

Self-Cleaning Litter Box Buyer's Checklist

Answer these before you spend \$100 to \$900 on a machine your cat might refuse.

Litter Box Picks

litterboxpicks.com

1. Your cats

- ☐ Every cat is inside the model's **minimum and maximum weight** (and minimum age, where stated).
Most models need a cat of roughly 2 to 3.3 lb and top out between 22 and 33 lb. Kittens under the minimum can't trigger the sensors safely.
- ☐ The **entry is wide and low enough** for your largest or oldest cat.
Big breeds need a wide opening; senior or arthritic cats need a low step-in.
- ☐ The machine is **rated for your number of cats**, and you've read how the maker words it.
Drawer and tray capacity is usually quoted for one cat. More cats means emptying more often.
- ☐ You still have a plan for **one box per cat, plus one**.
Cornell, the ASPCA and the AAHA/AAFP guidelines all repeat this rule. A simple, large, uncovered backup box counts.
- ☐ Your cat has **no urinary problem** you need to monitor closely.
An automatic box hides the clumps you'd normally check. Ask your vet first if your cat has a history.

2. Your space

- ☐ You've **measured the spot**, including clearance from walls and the space to pull out the drawer.
- ☐ It sits on a **firm, level floor** near a power outlet.
Weight-sensing features work best on hard floors; some makers sell a carpet tray.
- ☐ Your router broadcasts **2.4 GHz Wi-Fi**, if you want app features.
- ☐ For crystal-tray models, the spot isn't humid.
PetSafe advises keeping its crystal boxes out of bathrooms, laundry rooms and basements.

3. Litter and running costs

- ☐ You know **which litter it needs** and where you'll buy it.
Globe and drum boxes generally want clumping litter; rake models lock you into the brand's trays.
- ☐ You've priced the **recurring supplies**: liners or bags, carbon filters, deodorizer packs, or trays.
- ☐ You've accepted it's **not zero maintenance**.
You'll still empty a drawer, top up litter and deep-clean the unit.

4. Before you click buy

- ☐ The **return window** is long enough to give your cat a fair chance, and you know which seller's policy applies.
Trials offered by the maker often apply only when you buy direct.
- ☐ There's an adjustable **cleaning delay** for a skittish cat.
- ☐ You'll **start with the machine off**, in the old box's spot, with a scoop of used litter, and keep a regular box nearby during the switch.

See a vet right away if your cat strains in the box, cries while peeing, has blood in the urine or makes repeated trips with little or no urine. That can be an emergency, especially in male cats (Cornell Feline Health Center). Don't wait for an app alert.

Research-based checklist: built from manufacturer documentation and veterinary guidance (Cornell Feline Health Center, ASPCA, AAHA/AAFP). We haven't tested these machines hands-on. Specs change; always check the product page. Not veterinary advice. Full sourced guide: litterboxpicks.com/guides/self-cleaning-litter-box-buyers-guide/

Side-by-Side Worksheet

Fill in up to three models from the maker's spec page, then compare.

Litter Box Picks

	Model A	Model B	Model C
Model name			
Cat weight range (min to max)			
Minimum age			
Cats it's rated for			
Entry size / step-in height			
Footprint (W × D × H)			
Fits my measured spot?			
Litter type required			
Drawer / tray capacity (1 cat)			
Supplies + how often			
Adjustable cleaning delay?			
App / Wi-Fi band			
Return window + who it's with			
Warranty			
Price I found (date)			
Deal-breakers			

Where to look next

- Best self-cleaning litter boxes, compared: litterboxpicks.com/best/self-cleaning-litter-boxes/
- Two or more cats: litterboxpicks.com/best/self-cleaning-litter-boxes-multiple-cats/
- Small apartment: litterboxpicks.com/best/litter-box-for-small-apartment/
- Kittens: litterboxpicks.com/guides/self-cleaning-litter-box-kittens/

From our sister shop, WhiskerKeep (same owner as Litter Box Picks; not an affiliate link). Printable cat-care planners: a Litter Box Cleaning Schedule, health records, a medication tracker and more, as instant-download PDFs in US Letter and A4. whiskerkeep.etsy.com

New-customer offer: 15% off with code **WELCOME15** through Nov 3, 2026.