

# Pet Sitters: What to Look For

## HOW TO FIND A PET SITTER

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It's easy to find pet sitters in your area. However, finding a pet sitter that is a good fit can be more difficult to find. This brochure should help point you in the right direction in finding a pet sitter that will work for you and your pets.

First, learn everything you can about any potential pet sitter. Find out what their qualifications are and if there's any other additional services they may provide. Be sure to interview each candidate over the phone prior to making your final decision.

## LIST OF QUESTIONS TO ASK

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1. Can the sitter provide proof of being bonded?
2. Can the sitter provide proof of commercial liability insurance?
3. What sort of training, if any, has the pet sitter completed?
4. Is the sitter associated with any veterinarians who provide emergency services?
5. Does the sitter have any back-up plans if he/she becomes ill or has car trouble?
6. What other services does the sitter provide (in-home grooming, dog walking, etc.)?
7. Does the sitter provide a written estimate or contract describing services and fees?
8. How will this sitter check to make sure you have arrived home safely?
9. Will the sitter provide referrals from other clients? Will the sitter provide numbers of past clients for you to call?

## WHERE TO START LOOKING

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Always start with recommendations. Ask your friends, neighbors, co-workers, veterinarians ... anyone you trust who also has pets. You can also look in the yellow pages under Pet Sitting Services. Additionally, there are two organizations you can call that offer accreditation to pet sitters who have professional experience, completed pet-care-related home study courses, attended professional conferences, and who abide by a code of ethics set by the organizations. The first organization is the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters. Their phone number is: (800) 296-PETS. The second organization is Pet Sitters International, which can be reached at: (336) 983-9222. Ask both companies for referrals in your area.

## HOW TO CHOOSE

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In your choice making process, it is important to have the potential pet sitter meet your pets prior to actually hiring them. Watch how the sitter interacts with your pets, and how your pets interact with the sitter.

If the visit goes well, start out small. Hire the pet sitter for a short weekend trip. This will allow you to work out any possible kinks before leaving your pet with the sitter for longer periods of time.

## WHERE DO YOU FIT INTO THE PET SITTING PICTURE?

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Remember that you have responsibilities, too, when you entrust your pets to a pet sitter. Below are a list of things you can do to help ensure your pet(s) and pet sitter have a good time together.

### YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:

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- Be sure to make reservations with your pet sitter as early as possible, especially when it's holiday season.
- Ensure your pet is as well socialized as possible. Your pets should allow strangers to handle them. Remember that your pet sitter will need to get your pets to a veterinarian in case of emergency.
- Make sure your pets have current ID tags on their collars. And make sure your pets are wearing their collars prior to your departure.
- Have proof of current vaccines for your pet sitter, as well as access to important veterinarian records.
- Leave detailed, clear instructions (be as specific as possible). Don't forget to include emergency contact information for both you and your veterinarian, as well as back-up numbers in case you or your vet are unreachable.
- Leave all pet supplies (food, medications, litter, leashes, etc.) in one convenient location.
- Make sure you provide extra supplies in case you're gone longer than planned.
- Leave an extra key with someone trustworthy (such as a neighbor) as a backup. Make sure your pet sitter and the backup have each other's contact information.
- Make sure your pet sitter knows where your home's safety features are (such as security systems with their codes, circuit breakers, etc.).
- Make sure you take all of your pet sitter's information with you on your trip (such as phone numbers, email address, etc.).
- Most important: Relax and have a fun trip!



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