



# Choosing a Pet Sitter

**Probably the single most important thing you should do when hiring a pet sitter is to check their references. Remember that the pet sitter is caring for your pets and will have access to your home. It is imperative that they are professional and responsible.**

## Advantages of a Pet Sitter

When pets are removed from their home and placed in a kennel situation, it can be quite traumatic. Sensitive animals may regress in areas such as housetraining, destructive behavior and basic obedience when they return from a kennel. One of the biggest advantages of a pet sitter over a kennel is less stress for your pets.



When you're gone their routine is similar to their regular routine. Additionally, your pets will not be exposed to health concerns such as kennel cough or other airborne diseases. An added benefit is that most professional pet sitters will take care of routine housekeeping chores for you while you are gone.

To help you choose a pet sitter, a professional pet sitter organisation is PSI (Pet Sitters International – [www.petsit.com](http://www.petsit.com))

## Things to Consider

When hiring a professional pet sitter, some things to consider are:

- ❖ Are they insured?
- ❖ Do they present themselves professionally (i.e., returning phone calls, standardised fees & services, references, business cards and other literature, written contract, references, etc.)?
- ❖ Are they knowledgeable about the business (i.e., do they make an in-home visit to meet the pets and appear confident and comfortable; do they ask informed questions about medications, routines, safety issues, etc.; do they make arrangements to confirm client's arrival home; and so on)?
- ❖ Does the pet sitter have a contingency plan in case s/he is unable to attend to your pets?
- ❖ Does the pet sitter have access to emergency medical care?
- ❖ Is the pet sitter aware of all legal issues that might affect your pets (breed specific legislation, leash laws, etc.).
- ❖ Will the pet sitter be caring for your pets or will an employee?



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- ❗ If an employee will be caring for your pets: how long has the employee worked for the pet sitter; is the employee insured; will the employee make a pre-departure home visit to meet the pets?
- ❗ Do you feel comfortable with the pet sitter and trust your pets and home to him/her?

Don't hesitate to interview several pet sitters — you should approach hiring a pet sitter the same as you would hiring someone to care for your children.

Price is important, but you don't necessarily want the least or most expensive pet sitter — unless your pet sitter has come very highly recommended by more than one person, their pricing should be in line with other pet sitters in the area.

## Once You Decide on a Pet Sitter

Now that you've decided on a pet sitter, you should consider the following:

- ❗ How many times a day should the pet sitter visit? If your pet does not have access to a toileting area throughout the day, twice a day visits are the minimum.
- ❗ How much time should they spend while at your home? If you have a pet that thrives on human attention, or requires physical activity, be sure that your pet-sitter allots enough time to fulfill these needs.
- ❗ Make an extra key to any doors they will need access to.
- ❗ Be sure there are plenty of supplies (food, kitty litter, Kongs, etc.)
- ❗ Check all your pets' equipment to be sure it fits, in good working condition and is easily accessible.
- ❗ Be sure your house is clean – it is not the pet sitter's job to clean your house or take out the rubbish
- ❗ Fill out a *Pet Sitter Guide* for each pet – it's a good idea to give two copies – one to keep in your house and one to take with them.
- ❗ Make arrangements to communicate with the pet sitter at least once per week while you are gone.
- ❗ Be sure your premises are secure before leaving – all doors and windows should be closed and locked and all gates should be secure.



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