

Pet Safety Checklist (for cats & dogs)



- _____ Take “a pet’s eye-view” of things. Get down to the pet’s eye level and take a look around. Check areas that a pet can access by way of climbing or jumping.
- _____ Look for choking, strangulation and suffocation hazards. Window treatment cords should be cut so that there are no loops.
- _____ Look for wires and electrical cords that should be covered or unplugged to prevent pets from chewing them and possibly being electrocuted.
- _____ Look for human foods and medications that should not be left where pets can access them. Medications, cleaners, household chemicals, and laundry supplies should be kept on high shelves or in cupboards.
- _____ Look for “ladders” that curious pets can climb to access elevated areas, such as countertops and tabletops. These should be eliminated.
- _____ Check that any indoor plants are of varieties that are pet-safe. Lilies can cause kidney failure in cats. Other common plants that are toxic to pets include amaryllis, poinsettia, mums, and aloe vera.
- _____ Check the latches on cupboards to make sure the doors are kept shut. The smell and taste of some chemicals, such as anti-freeze, are especially appealing to both cats and dogs. Childproof latches work well to keep pets from prying open cabinets.
- _____ Check that the toilet lids are down. Especially if using automatic bowl cleaners, an inaccessible toilet bowl will help eliminate the risk of poisoning. And it also prevents a drowning hazard.
- _____ Check the trash can. It should be covered or located inside a latched cabinet.
- _____ Look at the windows. Cats are known to fall out of them. For windows that open, their screens should be made of sturdy wire mesh that’s properly installed.
- _____ Check the floor covering. Carpet isn’t the best choice for pet owners. Hardwood with adequate urethane finish is a common and easy-clean choice. Ceramic tile or other non-porous, hard-surface flooring is best.
- _____ Check that the heating and cooling vent registers have louvered covers installed over them.
- _____ Look behind the clothes washer and dryer. Openings in the wall or nearby cabinet should be patched.
- _____ Check the outdoor plants. Some plants are hazardous to dogs and cats, including azaleas, some ferns and ivies, daffodils, and daylilies. Pet-friendly plants include bamboo and, of course, catnip.
- _____ Check with local authorities about dog fences. Dog runs are typically constructed from chain-link fencing, and they provide a handy outdoor exercise area.
- _____ Look at the fencing. Check for openings and holes under the fence. Traditional fencing of a solid material (usually wood) is the best overall solution for most dogs. It secures the dog, it keeps out curious people and animals, and it’s typically attractive and blends in well with the home. Wooden fences can also prevent a dog from looking beyond its immediate territory, which can help reduce barking. “Invisible” fencing may include a wireless or underground wire system around the perimeter of the property.
- _____ Check for rescue alert stickers on windows and doors to let emergency responders know that pets are inside the home.