

# Taking a vacation? Here's what to do with your pet

Consider this breakdown of your vacation pet care options.

Does your pet give you those sad puppy dog eyes or crawl into your suitcase the moment you start packing for a trip?

If **traveling with your dog or cat** isn't doable, you may worry just as much (if not more!) about who you're leaving at home as what you're packing in your suitcase.

Finding proper cat or dog care while on vacation can help ease your mind *and* help keep your pet happy while their favorite human is away from home.

## Options for leaving pets while on vacation

Before you start weighing the pros and cons of your vacation pet care options, ask yourself these questions:

- What's my budget for arranging pet care while on vacation?
- Does my pet prefer the company of others or a familiar environment?
- Does my pet get along well with strangers?
- Do I know anyone who can take care of pets?
- Is my pet okay with being left alone?
- How much care does my pet need every day? Consider meals and dietary needs, medications, exercise requirements, etc.

If you're a pet parent heading out on vacation, you have several options when it comes to finding care for your dog or cat.

### Pet sitting

Many cats and dogs feel most relaxed in the comfort of their own home, so arranging for a pet sitter to come by for meals, potty breaks and walks is a great way to keep their environment and routine as normal as possible.

The cost of hiring a pet sitter is dependent on how often you want someone to stop by and for how long. Pet sitters normally check on your pet a few times a day, but there are also cat and dog sitters that stay at your home overnight.

Drop-ins work well for low-maintenance dogs and most cats, but if your pet suffers from **separation anxiety** or has special needs, you might feel more comfortable with an overnight pet sitter.

Thankfully, there are multiple avenues for finding a trusted and reliable in-home pet sitter. A professional pet sitter is usually highly trained and can easily accommodate your specific needs, but **professional pet sitting services** are also costly. If you need a last-minute pet sitter or your pet needs extra attention, hiring a professional pet sitter is a good way to go.

A more affordable option is to ask a neighbor, friend, coworker or family member to watch your pet. You can even offer your own pet sitting services in exchange! The drawback with a familiar face is that, unlike a professional pet sitter, you may have to adhere to their schedule and availability.

**Pet cameras** pair well with pet sitting services because they allow you to keep an eye on your pet. Some even have treat dispensers, two-way communication and extra ways to keep your pet entertained.

## In-home pet boarding

If hiring a pet sitter to stay in your home is too expensive, but you still want your pet to receive the same level of love and care, in-home pet boarding might be for you!

Discover your pet's home away from home by arranging for your pet to stay in another sitter's home. This option is usually more convenient for the pet sitter, so you might have better luck getting a friend or relative on board with watching your pet. Just check that your sitter's home is free of any **household hazards** or **poisonous house plants**.

There's the added security and comfort of not having to give up your house keys, but if your pet doesn't get along well with other animals, you'll need to find a sitter who doesn't own any pets.

## Traditional boarding

For around-the-clock pet care, consider dropping your pet off at a boarding facility, kennel or pet hotel. Many facilities require some advance notice, and how much comfort, coddling and individualized attention your pet receives is dependent on how much you're willing to spend. Walks and playtime, for example, usually cost extra. If you're nervous about leaving your pet at a boarding facility for the first time, consider testing the waters with daycare or even a one-night trial. Make sure to ask about any specials, as facilities sometimes offer discounts to new customers.

Most facilities require proof that your pet is up to date on their vaccinations, and you'll most likely need to provide your own pet food and any needed medications. Ask if you can bring something from home, like a toy or comfy bed, to help give your pet some extra comfort in their new environment!

## Our essential pet sitter checklist

Whether you decide to use an in-home pet sitter, a drop-in visitor or a boarding facility, a checklist is essential. Your list might include information such as:

- The type and brand of food your pet typically eats. Don't forget to include any approved treats and to have enough food!
- Any known allergies or sensitivities.
- Your pet's walking schedule or exercise routine.
- Your contact information, which should also be included on your pet's ID tag.
- Toys that are safe for your pet to play with — and which toys are their favorite!
- Any medication(s) your pet takes daily or as needed.
- Any health or behavioral concerns.
- Emergency info including your vet's name, address and phone number, along with proof of **pet health insurance** if applicable.

This type of information is vital to have on hand for any pet care professional, so that your pet receives proper care and treatment in the event of an emergency.

Since we're usually out of contact or hard to reach while travelling, it's also important to protect your pet by having this information clear and readily available.

## Bone voyage!

When you can leave your pet in the hands of someone you trust, you can truly relax and make the most of your vacay. From all of us at State Farm®, we wish you a safe and happy journey on your next adventure!

Discover how a **pet insurance policy** can help provide comfort no matter where life takes you and your pet.