

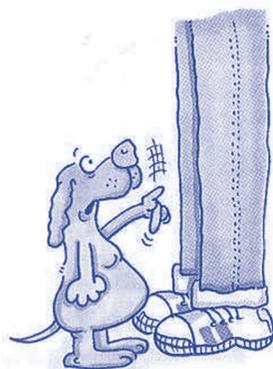


GOING AWAY? PLAN FOR YOUR PETS

"Animals are a beautiful part of creation. They are dependent on our kindness and compassion for their well-being. As we move forward in the new South Africa, let us never forget that our animals are part of our society and that we, as responsible people, are duty-bound to take care of them in the best possible way."
Derek Hanekom, Minister of Land Affairs & Agriculture, South Africa, 1996 (foreword to Heroes & Lionhearts)

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Holidays need careful planning. That includes making plans for the care and well-being of your animals. Don't leave it to the last minute!



Reputable, dependable boarding kennels and home pet care services are booked up well ahead of any holiday season so you need to get in early. ALL pets need to be cared for if you go away for even the shortest time. That includes your fish, birds, mice, guinea pigs and hamsters.

SO, WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

- Take your pet(s) to a boarding kennel / cattery.
- Take your pet(s) with you (not recommended).
- Use a house / pet sitter.
- Use a home pet care service.

BOARDING KENNELS/CATTERY

- Is your pet's inoculation up to date? Reputable boarding kennels require proof of this and your pet's vaccination certificates should be dated at least 2 weeks before your pets are admitted to boarding facilities.
- Have you been to view the boarding kennels / cattery yourself?
- Have you made sure the food being served by the boarding



- kennel / cattery meets your pet's dietary requirements?
- Are dogs exercised?
- Does the kennel / cattery appear to be well maintained?
- How many animals are housed in each kennel / cat pen?
- Have you been able to observe how the staff treat and handle the animals?
- Does the kennel / cattery have a vet visit the kennels on a daily basis?
- Are the staff trained to recognise animals that may not be well or to identify unhealthy stools?

A well-run, reputable boarding kennel is normally a safe manner in which to house your animals while you're away. It also means that your pets are not lonely because of the activity around them.

The disadvantages of boarding kennels / catteries:

- Your pet is away from its home environment and may be stressed or depressed because you are also no longer around. Your pet does not know if it will see you ever again;
- Even though your pet has been vaccinated it could still pick up an illness like kennel cough against which there is no inoculation.

TAKE YOUR PET ON HOLIDAY WITH YOU

- Is your pet's inoculation up to date?
- Does your pet have a temporary new ID disc with your contactable details?
- Do you have enough tranquillisers for the journey?
- Do you have a cool place in the vehicle (not the boot) where your pet can lie?
- Do you have enough water for your pet to drink during the journey?
- Is the cat-carrying cage large enough so that the cat won't lie in its faeces or urine?
- Can the cat cage be locked securely?
- Is the leash readily available so that you can ensure that your dog does not run free when you (and your dog) have restroom stops?

REMEMBER: NEVER leave your pet inside the vehicle on a warm or hot day, even if it is parked in the shade with the windows slightly open. Have you thought about how you would get your pet back if it did go missing while it is with you on holiday?



The disadvantages of taking your pet with you:

- Finding accommodation that accepts your pet;
- In the case of cats, they usually need up to 14 days to acclimatise to a new environment before they can be let out on their own;
- Travelling long distances in the car can be stressful for dogs and cats.

USE A HOME PET CARE SERVICE

The check list is similar to that for the house / pet sitter.

Your pets must be visited a minimum of once daily because an animal that becomes sick can deteriorate very rapidly and animals do need companionship.

The only disadvantage of a home pet care service is that the time spent at your home is limited.

FIREWORKS - Don't let them face the terror alone

Many animals are terrified of fireworks, especially bearing in mind that fireworks are 5 times louder to dogs and cats than humans. If you have left your pets at home in the care of a Housesitter or Home Pet Care service or someone else, please make arrangements on nights like Guy Fawkes and New Year, for your animals to be kept inside the house and have someone stay with them.

USE A HOUSE / PET SITTER

- Will the house / pet sitter be living with the pets in your home while you're away?
- If your pet is a dog, will the house / pet sitter be walking him / her (on a leash)?
- Is your property secured in such a way that no one can simply stroll into your property and leave the gate open?
- Have you left enough food for the duration of your holiday plus extra?
- If the house / pet sitter is a professional service, how long has it been in business?
- Have you checked on the house sitting service – is it known to your vet and is he / she willing to recommend it?
- Have you checked on their references from previous clients?
- What animal knowledge does the house / pet sitter have?
- Have you made arrangements with the vet in case your animal becomes sick?
- Does your pet have collar and tag identification and / or a microchip?
- Have you given clear written as well as verbal instructions for the care of your pet?
- Does the house / pet sitter know what to do if your pet goes missing while you're away – i.e. contact numbers for the SPCA and vets serving the area?

- An emergency back-up plan is needed in case for some unforeseen reason, the house / pet sitter is unable to continue performing his or her duties (i.e. illness or accident)?

It is advisable that you ensure that your pet knows the house sitter in advance of your absence, so that your pet is more comfortable and so that you can assess if there are likely to be any bonding problems.

Advantages of using a house / pet sitter are:

- that animals are often much happier continuing to live at home with a familiar routine and they have maximum exposure to companionship;
- that they are not exposed to the risk of infectious diseases from other animals;
- you do not have to transport your pets to and from the boarding kennel / cattery;
- They also provide security as would-be burglars won't realise that you're not there.

We wish to thank the RSPCA, as well as Mike Payne and the Dogs Trust (UK) for use of their pictures in this leaflet.

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