

# YOU'RE HIRING SOMEONE TO CARE FOR YOUR PETS!



So you're hiring a dog walker or pet sitter to care for your pets. Here are just a few things you probably didn't think about to help make it a positive experience!

1. **Interviewing your candidate** - You have every right to interview the person who will be taking care of your beloved pets while you're at work or you are away. Be sure to be armed with questions about their qualifications and how long they have been in their line of work. While certification does not necessarily mean qualified, it does show a knowledge base. Be sure to ask what they plan to do should certain situations arise. Have the candidate meet your pet and see how they react to one another. Animals can tell you a lot about a person by the way they act when they first meet.
2. **Get your candidate's contact info** - This sounds like a no brainer, but you would be surprised how many pet parents give their info but don't ask for the dog walker's/ pet sitter's information. Be sure they have the information for your local Vet incase of an emergency and provide an emergency contact for them provided they cannot reach you in an emergency.

3. **Setting up your home** - For the first visit, set up safety precautions for your pet and the person entering. Have your pets gated into one room with a baby gate, crate your pup, or place a baby gate across an area that the person will be entering from (top of the stairs). This will protect your pets from darting out the door when opened and it will prevent the person from injury should your pup become protective of his house. While your dog may be the most friendly dog in the neighborhood, when he is home alone all day and someone abruptly enters he may by instinct become protective. This cannot be predicted, but it can be prevented. Many dog walkers and pet sitters are bitten by a dog they were friendly with just days before at the meet and greet. Do your due diligence to protect everyone involved.
  
4. **Have them send you pictures** - Arrange for your pet caretaker to send you pictures of your pet periodically after they arrive for their walk or throughout their stay at the house while you're gone. This provides a sense of security that your pet is safe and happy. You can tell a lot about how an animal feels by the way it looks. Be sure to have a consistent connection with the person you have hired. You would be surprised at how many pet parents don't check in.
  
5. **Maintain a good relationship with your pet caretaker** - Remember, this person is taking care of your most precious possessions including your home, your belongings and your living, breathing family members. You want to maintain a positive relationship with them to assure your things are well taken care of. A disgruntled caretaker may "forget" to visit or may misplace things periodically. This is not ideal for anyone. Go the extra mile to thank your caretaker and if possible tip them for their hard work.