

Choosing a reliable kitty sitter

The next time you're out of town, who will take care of Fluffy or Felix?

Some cat families choose to board their kitty at a veterinary clinic or boarding facility. The advantage is that people are present to observe and care for your cat throughout the day. Other cat families opt to use a kitty sitter stopping in to provide care. The advantage is that your cat stays in his or her home.



Choosing a kitty sitter can be difficult since not everyone has the same standards of care. You want someone who will do more than just fill up a food bowl and instead, provide the daily care that your cat needs while you are away. If possible, ask family members or friends for a referral. In all cases, ask lots of questions about what you and your cat can expect from your kitty sitter while you are away.

What type of person makes the best kitty sitter? Look for someone who:

- Loves cats! Are they truly fixated on felines – or just think cats are easy to care for?
- Maintains a regular cat-sitting schedule. You'll want someone who takes their responsibilities seriously and doesn't just "fit you in."
- Has experience with cats (or whatever your type of pet).
- Provides good references. Be sure to find out what others think and what they liked or didn't like about the kitty sitter's services.
- Has no criminal history. Enough said!

What should you ask a prospective kitty sitter?

Plan a first meeting with a prospective kitty sitter to get to know them and to see how they interact with your cat or cats. During this interview, find out:

- How much time will the kitty sitter spend with your cat each day? Request a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour per visit at least once a day, but ideally twice daily.
- What will he/she do during this time? Feeding alone is not enough. Daily interaction, play and observation are all important to your cat's wellbeing.
- Will they schedule a no-charge "orientation" to learn about your cat's needs, normal behavior and routines? It's important for your cat to be familiar with the kitty sitter before you leave.
- What services does kitty sitting include? You want someone who will clean litter boxes daily, give medication and transport your cat to the veterinarian if needed.
- How committed are they? Make sure you are both on the same page in terms of expectations and standards for care.
- Is the pet sitter bonded and insured? If not, there are risks to your home and property.
- Does the kitty sitter know pet CPR and are they trained in handling pet medical emergencies?
- What are the kitty's sitter's fees and how will you be charged? Be sure you agree on this ahead of time!

