

Boarding Facility or Pet Sitter for your Cat?

Pet owners searching for a suitable boarding facility to care for their pets while they are away from their homes can be faced with a bewildering array of choices. There are a few different types of boarding options for dogs and cats, and it's important to look beyond a shiny website to determine the best service for your pet. Not all dogs do well at traditional boarding facilities and may do better staying with a local pet sitter who takes in one or a few dogs at a time to live in their home. Conversely, some dogs – especially those dogs that are not the most dog social of pooches – will do better in a kennel environment with their own dedicated living space and run. Some cats tend to do better in their own home with a pet sitter coming to visit them daily, but very social cats may need more human interaction and will be better served by staying in a pet sitter's home.



The following information will provide an overview of how to choose the right boarding facility for your pet, how to prepare for the boarding experience, and some resources on how to find boarding facilities.

What's Best for My Cat?

Dr. Jacklyn Ellis, Director of Behaviour at Toronto Humane Society, suggests that there is no one size fits all option for cats. A couple of important things to consider when looking at boarding options are: Is my cat fearful of new people?

- Is my cat fearful in new places?
- Is my cat aggressive towards people or other cats?
- Is my cat very social and loves people?

An easy way to decide on the best option is to think about what kind of situation would make your cat the happiest. If your cat does not deal with new environments well, it makes sense to have someone come over and check in on your cat once or twice daily to provide food, water, enrichment and make sure the litter box is clean. However, some cats may be very social and would be stressed with the lack of companionship. For those cats, Dr. Ellis suggests that a set up where the cat stays with a sitter in their home is best. If you do not have any one to stay in your home or come by to care for your cat, or if your cat exhibits acute aggression towards unknown people, a boarding facility where the cat has his/her own enclosure may be the best solution.

Most boarding facilities and in-home cat sitters will have a comprehensive questionnaire that you will fill out to provide them with information about your cat which will help them also determine if your cat will be successful in their environment. Many ethical and reputable cat sitters and facilities will be happy to provide suggestions or recommendations for other services or service providers.

