

What is a pet sitter?



The definition of pet sitting. In 1997 Pet Sitters International (PSI) successfully campaigned to have “pet sitting” added to the Random House Dictionary.

“Pet sitting” is defined as “the act of caring for a pet in its own home while the owner is away.” Dog walking is a form of pet sitting since it involves coming to the pet’s home to provide exercise and companionship.

Caring for pets in the clients’ homes is what separates pet sitters from boarders or doggie day cares. What are the advantages of pet sitting (over other pet-care options)?

- Pets are happier and experience less stress at home in their familiar environment.
- Diet and exercise routines are uninterrupted.
- Travel trauma for both owner and pet is eliminated.
- Pet's exposure to illness is minimized.

Occasionally, extenuating circumstances (i.e., a pet with special health issues or severe separation anxiety or repairs taking place in the pet’s home) warrants a pet sitter caring for a client’s pet in his or her own home, and does offer a limited in-the-pet sitter’s -home pet care option.

Pet sitting is a requirement of PSI membership. PSI’s mission and identity require that regular membership be limited to those who provide pet-sitting services. PSI recognizes that many pet-sitting businesses are rapidly growing and diversifying and welcomes members who offer services such as boarding, grooming, training, transportation, and waste removal in addition to pet sitting. PSI reserves the right to randomly audit member businesses to determine whether pet-sitting services are being offered. Links irrelevant to pet care are not permitted on the PSI locator.

What does a pet sitter do? As the definition above indicates, pet sitters care for clients’ pets in the clients’ home. Pet owners often use pet sitters when they go on a vacation, travel for business or are working long hours.

Pet sitters often offer more than one pet-sitting visit per day, and some pet sitters offer overnight stays as well. During the pet-sitting visits, pet sitters perform a variety of tasks, including:

- Feeding the pets and changing their water bowls
- Providing exercise and play time (may include walking the dog)
- Cleaning litter boxes and cleaning up any other pet messes
- Administering pet medications, if needed
- Providing lots of TLC!

Pet sitters also often bring in mail or newspapers and alternate blinds and lights to give the home a “lived-in look” if the owners are away. Pet sitters may also perform other tasks as requested by the pet owners