

Finding a pet sitter? Tips to ensure your loved one's safety

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With Labor Day quickly approaching, some Valley pet owners are opting for a pet sitter instead of dropping their four-legged friends off at a boarding facility.

However Paul Mann, founder and CEO of FETCH! Pet Care, believes that placing your furry family member in the hands of another should be taken with caution.

"Buyer beware, as all pet sitters are not created equal," cautions Mann.

Mann offers this **Top 10 checklist** for selecting a professional pet sitting service:

1. Locate a pet sitter in your area using a reputable source, such as [Fetch! Pet Care](#)
2. Diligently check all of the company's references – at least three should be voluntarily provided
3. Ensure the company is fully bonded *and* insured
4. Confirm that your sitter has undergone a criminal background check and has received proper training
5. Pre-interview sitter with your pet(s) present to observe interactions and establish a "comfort level" for both you and the pet(s)
6. Clearly state how you would like the sitter to use his/her visit time in terms of walking, playing, feeding, cleaning, etc.
7. Verify that the sitter can accommodate both your pet's daily feeding and walking schedule as well as your desired vacation schedule, even during the busiest holidays
8. Ensure the company offers 7-day per week telephone and email availability
9. Provide medical and behavioral history about your pet(s) as well as veterinary and other emergency contact information, and gather all necessary supplies, including food, vitamins, and treats in one central location
10. Ensure the company has "backup" measures in place should your sitter have an emergency that prevents them from completing your assignment

“Out of concern for their pet's health, well-being and safety, more people are avoiding kennel, boarding and daycare facilities, and even family members or the neighbor's kids, in favor of professional home-based pet care," said Mann.

"However, the difficulty of finding reliable, at-home service providers has spawned the need for firm guidelines on selecting the right professional. If a pet owner takes these few relatively simple ideas into account before entrusting their pet to another, they can enjoy peace of mind that their pet - and their home - will be well cared for."

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