



# Tips for Conducting a Professional Pet Sitter Interview

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Pet Sitters International is pleased to provide pet owners with a checklist of pertinent information and questions to help in the pet sitter interview process.

We encourage you to take some time early in the selection process to determine the pet sitter best suited for your situation. Once you've made the best selection, we hope you'll agree with the multitudes of other pet owners who say, "My pet sitter is worth her (or his) weight in gold!"

*Does the pet sitter (or agency) keep regular office hours?*

- ✓ A Professional pet sitter should have a schedule of office hours. A larger business may have additional personnel to answer phone calls or e-mails, but many pet sitters are sole proprietors who use answering machines to field inquiries.

*If you left a message inquiring about services, how soon was it returned?*

- ✓ All phone calls should be returned within 24 hours.

*How much notice does the pet sitter (or agency) need in order to schedule your request for a pet sitter?*

- ✓ Most pet sitters request at least two weeks notice, but may be able to accommodate an occasional short-notice assignment. Sometimes there is an additional charge for short-notice assignments.

*Does the pet sitter (or agency) have established fees for pet care they can quote over the phone and/or in company literature?*

- ✓ A professional pet sitter should have a published list of fees that cover the most common pet-care requests. Fees for special services may be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

*Is the pet sitter bonded and insured?*

- ✓ Ask for proof of coverage. PSI members have access to group rates on policies specifically for pet-sitters and are provided insurance cards.

*Does the sitter have a clean criminal history?*

- ✓ Ask for third-party credentials that verify the sitter has a history of honesty and integrity. Official verification documents will contain current annual dates (within one year) and certified seals. PSI offers its members background checks certified through CastleBranch, Inc. and CertifiedBackground. Remember, the person you choose to hire will have access to your property and your beloved animal companion(s). This documentation can provide the peace of mind you seek when admitting a new pet-care provider to your home.

*Does the pet sitter meet with you and your pet(s) in advance? Is there a charge for this in-home meeting?*

- ✓ Initial interviews allow the pet sitter to meet with you in your home, interact with your pets and discuss services and business policies. These visits are highly recommended for both pet owner and pet sitter. Some pet sitters offer this service at no charge, while others charge a nominal fee for their time and travel expenses.

*How much experience does the pet sitter have in caring for your particular type of pet?*

- ✓ Experience in caring for special needs pets or unusual types of pets is helpful if that is what you need. Pet sitters who have completed PSI's Accreditation Program have the resources on hand to care for a wide variety of companion animal species.

*Does the pet sitter willingly and happily provide references?*

- ✓ PSI recommends that all of its members have a list of references for potential clients to contact.