



Before You Board

June 2015

This was written with dog boarding kennels in mind but can be applied to any pet service or species.

Most areas offer no laws to protect your pets from unfit individuals offering pet services. There are no licensing requirements or regulations for pet walkers, sitters, daycare, kennels and groomers. Too many dogs, too few staff, inadequate knowledge and not enough space can lead to disastrous outcomes. Under most jurisdictions animals are property. Even though animal cruelty laws may be in place they are seldom enforced. The laws are riddled with loopholes so when a person(s) is charged there is seldom a befitting consequence for the offenders.

Our animals did not choose us we chose them. We owe them the love, care & safety they deserve. Your animal can't talk so unless your dog is returned to you with physical scars or injuries, or not returned at all, you may never know how they were treated. Therefore, it is imperative that you search out people who are compassionate, ethical, and responsible with a deep respect for the feelings of animals. Family and friends are often the best choices and in the pet's own home is the most ideal environment.

If that's not possible however, question everything, observe, interview and research thoroughly. Keep in mind, recommendations are only as reliable as the person giving them. Unless the source of a recommendation is as responsible and concerned as you are, really do have a thorough knowledge of the business and the people they are recommending then their opinions are useless and have no value. Don't choose a service based on their rates. To cheap out isn't worth it and paying excessive rates guarantees nothing. A business with a webcam is a useful feature but cannot be relied on to expose all abuse. If you are lucky enough to find the right people, book early. Drop by several times to reassure yourself you made the right choice. Take your pet with you to familiarize them with the premises and the staff.



If possible have your pet taken in for a physical exam before leaving to make sure nothing important is developing that can worsen while you are away. Give thorough written instructions if medication is required. Leave prescription information and veterinary contact numbers with the kennel. Let your vet know you will be away and leaving your pet at a boarding facility. Ensuring your pet is bathed with clipped nails and clean ears before leaving will help to make them comfortable. Leave familiar items, comfort toys, bedding and something that belongs to you like an old T-shirt or sock to leave with your dog.

Always have a friend randomly check in on your pet EVERY few days while you are away. A second choice of boarding kennels can be a lifesaver if your 'pet checker' finds the kennel's care deficient and isn't able to provide care themselves.

Choosing a Boarding Facility

Research ...Interview ...Question ...Observe ... Make notes &

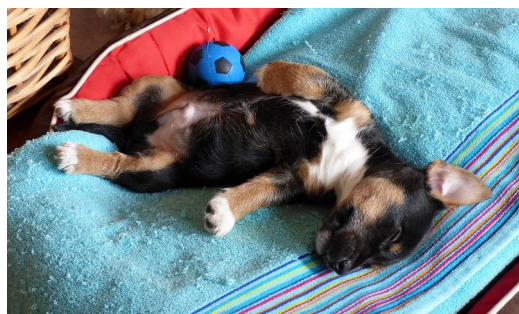
ASK:

- for the boarder's written policies and rules - if policies and rules are vague or non-existent be on guard.
- for a copy of the agreement they require you fill out - if the document is more a disclaimer & release form than used to seek information on your pet, be wary. Do they ask the right info about your pet? Remember, what they neglect to ask you they likely neglected to ask about other pets being boarded. This could lead to dogs being boarded with serious issues that haven't been made known. **CROSS OUT** anything on their form(s) that does not apply or you do not fully agree with. Move on if they protest.
- about the owners experience and knowledge with animals. Google the names of everyone involved.
- to tour the facilities and meet the pets currently boarded. Observe every animal's behavior and environment for safety & cleanliness. Check the temperature of rooms, condition and availability of beds, bowls & toys. Is there fresh water available and outdoor access? Observe each dog. Are dogs howling and barking constantly? Are they subdued and withdrawn? Are dogs isolated? How do the dogs behave around the staff? Trust your instincts. If an animal is referred to as a troublemaker, a sissy or baby insist on an explanation as this can be an important red flag about the quality of care dogs are receiving.
- if you can, take pictures or video. There is a lot to absorb and pictures can help you see things you missed.
- if they use shock, prong or choke collars. If yes, leave.
- if no, have they ever used these collars, and if so, why the policy change? Are they still on the premises?
- if they crate dogs? If so, what is the longest time a dog has been crated for? Crating for some is a habitual occurrence & for others it is unnatural & torturous. Do they respect a client's 'no crate' policy?
- to meet and interview staff about their philosophies, experience, training and discipline methods. How long have they been employed with the kennel? Frequent staff turnover is often a red flag.
- what procedures are in place for emergency situations like lost dogs, dog fights etc.
- will supervision be provided 24/7.
- do staff members have pet first aid knowledge?

- the maximum number of animals kept at any given time and what is the ratio of staff to dogs.
- how they would handle a dog with fears, such as fireworks or thunder.
- if you can bring friends & family to tour the facility. Additional opinions can be invaluable.
- if a friend can come by and check on your pet while you are away. (Be on guard if only designated times are available for visits. This defeats the purpose of random checks.)
- if the facility is affiliated with any organizations, veterinarian or training facility. If so, get the particulars and research their policies.
- Are yearly vaccinations required? Important if you don't vaccinate annually!
- how often the animals have access to each other in addition to private time.
- if animals are grouped in relation to size, age and personality for socializing and play.
- if ample outdoor space, grassy and natural pesticide-free areas are available.
- what the daily schedule looks like at the facility. Do they allow adequate time for exercise, quiet time, bathroom breaks and is the schedule flexible enough to accommodate delays and minimize stress.
- what kind of exercise and activities are provided? If they don't ask you the type of activities your dog likes or dislikes, your dog could be subjected to long hikes they can't handle or not enough activity to stay occupied and de-stressed. Request no activity that is forced or overly repetitive.
- if they need or use volunteers. If so, volunteer for a few days.
- how they handle a dog that is incessantly barking or whining? If their answer doesn't feel right or they skirt around the question, dig deeper.
- for references of current and past clients. Take what the references say with a grain of salt.
- if staff or policies have changed. Question anew every time you return to use the service if significant time has passed.

If the facility accepts your pet for boarding without asking to meet your dog first be concerned. Be open and honest with the type of care you expect. Ask if they can't comply with your requests to please be transparent and honest. Are they willing to commit to your requirements in writing?

BanShockCollars.ca



SAMPLE BOARDING SERVICE AGREEMENT

between Pet Owner(s) _____

And Facility _____

Address _____

in respect to the boarding, care and management of our Pet(s) _____

Breed(s) _____ Ages _____

This facility agrees to adhere to the following requirements to care for the above named pet(s) and will instruct any volunteers or person(s) in their employ to do the same:

- Notify me immediately if my dog(s) is not adjusting well.
- Request permission before taking any steps to rectify a problem with my dog(s), medically, behaviorally or physically.
- To never use or allow the use of a shock, prong, choke collar or muzzle on my dog(s).
- To never crate my dog(s) unless you have permission from me to do so for an exceptional reason like a medical emergency.
- Never permit employees or trainers to interact with my dog(s) in a harsh or punishing fashion.
- To provide my dog(s) with his daily meals, snacks and medication, if any, as agreed to and set out in the attached schedule. To provide my dog(s) ample fresh water, daily exercise and adequate bathroom breaks every day.
- To supervise, limit & monitor the number and types of dogs my dog(s) is left with in play or rest areas and to provide my dog with ample healthy alternatives, if needed. Preferences & directions are listed in an attached document.
- To provide personal time, attention and stimulation with regard to my dog's individual & emotional needs and fears; praise, patting, massage, company, conversation, reassurance etc.
- To provide my dog(s) with professional & immediate vet care in an emergency and to notify me immediately. My pet's vet will be contacted first before an alternative vet is employed.
- To allow full access to my pet(s) by the person(s) I have authorized to visit or remove my pet, (temporarily or permanently) while I am away. If removed permanently any outstanding boarding fees will be paid in full at time of pick up.

I / we have authorized:

Authorized signature _____ Date _____
(Boarding Owner/Operator)

Authorized signature _____ Date _____
(Boarding Owner/Operator)

Pet Owner(s) _____

Date _____ Date _____

****Please refer to additional care details, instructions & contact info to be provided on a separate page.***

Additional Care Instructions and Contact Information

Don't forget to provide:

- ✓ Contact Information of the owners
- ✓ Contact Information for Authorized Visitor
- ✓ Contact Information of the pet(s) Veterinarians
- ✓ Information for an additional emergency contact
- ✓ Pets breed, age, personality, characteristics
- ✓ Specific words the pet understands
- ✓ Preferences; exercise, play style, preferred playmates, toys, resting times/places etc.
- ✓ Fears /phobias & best remedies
- ✓ Medical history /Medications/ Vaccinations /Titers
- ✓ Tattoo #/ Chip # / Photos & other identifying documents
- ✓ Dates & times boarding services are required
- ✓ Fees agreed to per day - Inclusions /Exclusions
- ✓ How often & by what method you would like status updates

The same advice and protocols can be applied when searching for competent safe daycare and grooming facilities. Please note that if your dog is stressed and anxious on repeat visits, do not force or push your dog but instead find alternative services.

The purpose of this information is to provide pet owners with an outline of ways to protect their pets when leaving them in the care of others. Banshockcollars.ca also recommend you seek advice, opinions, views and ideas from other trusted sources before making any final decisions.

“Boarding facilities should be like a second home where your pets feel safe & happy”

