



FIREPAW, Inc.

THE FOUNDATION FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION
PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE

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How to Find, Keep and Enjoy a Pet-Friendly Rental



Renters with companion animals are a special group. Even when you pay your rent on time and make sure you are a responsible pet owner/guardian you may still face an uphill battle when it comes to housing. Despite these difficulties there is good news. There are a growing number of savvy landlords who realize that tenants with animals can be a real asset.

This information packet was designed to offer tenants with animals tips and resources to maximize their attractiveness as rental applicants and to assist in the process of securing--and maintaining--happy and fulfilling housing arrangements for yourself, your neighbors, your landlord, and your animal.

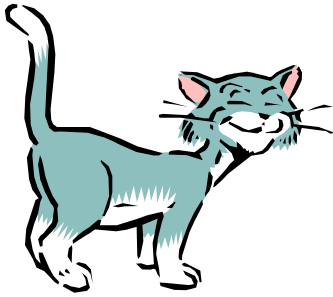
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Securing a Pet-Friendly Rental



If you don't already know it, finding an apartment--or even a house--to rent that accepts pets can be difficult. Depending on what part of the country you live in it could take weeks or even months to secure an affordable pet-friendly rental. In some regions there are many more tenants with animals (or tenants who plan to get an animal) than there are affordable rental units. That means the competition can be stiff. In order to secure the housing you want with minimal time and hassle there are a few things you should do...

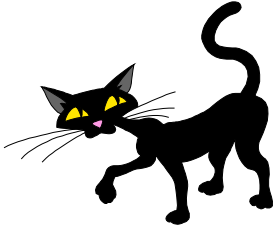


CREATE A PET-FRIENDLY RESUME

Your pet's resume helps communicate a history and helps "sell" you and your pet to potential landlords in the same way your job resume helps "sell" you to a potential employer. Pet resumes are becoming a "must" in some parts of the country and, whether or not a potential landlord requires it, offering one can put you head and shoulders above the rest of your competition. Having a pet resume to offer shows potential landlords you have thought through the responsibilities of being a tenant with a pet. It will also allow the landlord to see the potential strengths of you--and your animal-- as tenants.

What should I put on my pet's resume?

The individual entries will vary from one pet to the next. However, there are some key items you will want to be sure to list. Remember, as with your own job resume be sure to be honest and only list relevant, verifiable information. Creating a resume that isn't completely forthright will very often come back to haunt you.



The Basics

- Type of animal (dog/cat/bird/gerbil/etc.)
- Animal's age and weight
- Animal's personality characteristics
- Animal's health history/any health conditions relevant to renting--list veterinarian's name and contact information
- Grooming information
- Special training (such as obedience training)/trainer's name and contact information
- Pet-sitters/Boarding facilities who have watched your animal and can attest to animal's demeanor/personality/habits--list names and contact information
- Landlords and neighbors who can attest to your pet's good behavior
- Habits (such as gets walked 3 times a day/sleeps during the day/only stays indoors, etc.)
- Special characteristics (such as does not bark when left alone/has never destroyed property/always uses the litter box, friendly--loves kids/other animals, etc.)
- Photo--optional. If you have the ability, include a photo of your pet on the resume

Note: If you have renter's insurance with pet coverage be sure to mention it on your pet resume.

Spot's Pet Resume

Tenant Applicant's Name: Joe Brown
Current Address: 123 Oak Street, Anywhere, USA 12345
Home Telephone: 555-111-2222 Work Telephone: 555-222-1111

Spot's Special Characteristics

Spot is a 55 lb. neutered male dog. He is a 5 year-old shepherd mix. Spot is very well-behaved and gets along well with children, adults and other dogs. He is housebroken and has never chewed or damaged any household items. Spot is a happy, content animal as verified recently by his veterinarian and an animal communicator (please see references).

Habits

Spot is accustomed to loud noises and does not bark unless someone is at the door. Spot loves to take hikes and gets walked two times a day during weekdays and three times a day on weekends. When I need to be away for business trips Spot either has his pet-sitter watch him or he goes to the boarder (please see references below).

Training

Spot had specialized obedience training when he was a puppy and follows commands.

Health

Spot is in good health. He gets regular checkups and is current on rabies vaccines and all shots. Spot takes Frontline to prevent fleas and ticks.

Grooming

Spot goes to the groomer every other month. He receives the full treatment--including nail-trimming.

Other

Spot never leaves for walks without his "poop bags" and is always picked up after. Spot is registered with the county and the state.

References

Trainer: Jill Owens /Telephone: (111) 555-0000
Pet Sitter: John Light/ Telephone: (111) 555-2222
Boarder: Dogs Love It Boarding/ Telephone: (111) 555-1111
Veterinarian: Dr. Sordon/Telephone: (111) 555-6666
Groomer: Pampered Pet Grooming/Telephone: (111) 555-7777

Spot's Previous Landlords:

Jack Bean/Telephone: (111) 555-9999; Sue Coral/Telephone: (111) 555-8888

Spot's Previous Neighbors:

Kelly Gold/ Telephone: (111) 555-3333; Bill Malar/Telephone: (111) 555-4444

Registration #: AG5473123

BE PREPARED TO PAY A PET DEPOSIT AND/OR HIGHER RENT

Many landlords who allow pets require a special pet deposit, separate from the traditional rental deposit. This is done to defray the costs sometimes associated with damage resulting from pet owner/guardians who do not take care of their animals as they should. While rare, some rental property owners may require additional rent for permitting pets (often \$10-\$20 per pet). It is not unheard of for a portion of the pet deposit to be nonrefundable--even if there is no damage resulting from your animal.

BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE

If you have a verifiable history of being a responsible pet owner/guardian you will be in a good position to negotiate details when securing a pet-friendly rental...

Pet Deposit/Extra Rent

You may be able to negotiate the amount of the pet deposit and/or extra rent costs for pets if your good pet references can be verified and you are able to demonstrate that your animal is low-risk to the rental property and low-risk for problems to other tenants and their animals. Be sure to list all the verifiable positive aspects of your animal--and the references--on your pet resume. If you are unable to negotiate initially, you may be able to persuade the landlord to revisit the issue when it is time to renew the lease and you and your pet have had a year to demonstrate that you are both good tenants.



Type/Size/Weight of Animal

As with pet deposits, with a strong, favorable pet resume and references you may be able to negotiate in circumstances where your animal does not meet the type/size/weight requirements. The key factors most rental property owners are concerned with are damage to the property and potential problems with other tenants and their animals. If you have a strong pet resume and verifiable references willing to attest to your and your pet's past behavior it is possible to overcome a potential landlord's concerns. You may also be able to get permission for an 80-lb. dog in a place with a "50-lb. weight limit" if you can demonstrate that your dog will not be a risk to property or neighbors. (Though it is more challenging to convince a

landlord to take dogs in apartments with a "Cats Only" policy, it is always worth a try if you really like the rental property, can demonstrate through your references and pet resume that you are low-risk for potential problems, and are willing to put down more of a pet deposit than normal.)

Negotiating with landlords who do not have a "Pets Welcome" sign out

Just because landlords may not list their units as "Pet Friendly" does not mean they are all opposed to tenants with animals--if the right people, pets and conditions come along. It is probably a waste of time to approach those landlords who expressly advertise "No Pets Allowed". However, for those who do not state it specifically, there may be room to negotiate.

If you find a place that seems a perfect fit in all ways except the pet issue, consider trying to negotiate for it. After seeing the unit you can begin by expressing your interest in it and letting the landlord know that the unit would be a perfect *long-term* rental for you. Next, present your own rental resume, encouraging the landlord to contact your references. If discussions proceed about your tenancy you can then present your animal's pet resume, making sure to address any concerns about your pet with regard to the property and neighbors.

If the landlord still seems reluctant but open, suggest a pet deposit. Remember, many landlords--especially those who have never rented to tenants with pets--may be unfamiliar (or simply not thinking about) the fact that their assets can be protected with a pet deposit. If s/he still seems reluctant, express your interest in a long-term tenancy, your willingness to put down a separate pet deposit, and invite him/her to call the references on your pet's resume. Finally, thank the landlord for his/her time and for being open to at least consider the possibility of having a pet-friendly rental. Be sure you follow up in a few days with a polite inquiry as to the status of your application.

A Final Word

Being your pet's guardian is a responsibility that lasts for the life of your animal. No matter how good a rental unit may seem, if the property owners do not accept pets, it is not for you! Remember, never conceal the fact that you have a pet! And never abandon your animal simply because the rental you like does not accept animals! Keep in mind that while finding the right pet-friendly rental can be challenging it *is* possible. Put the word out that you are looking for a pet-friendly rental to coworkers, friends and family, be creative, and most of all, be persistent. You *will* eventually find just the right home for yourself *and* your animal!



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Maintaining Good Standing in a Pet-Friendly Rental



Once you secure a pet-friendly rental your job has just begun. Now you must live up to the responsibilities of being a good pet owner/guardian and a good tenant.

Savvy rental property owners know that tenants with animals can be a valuable asset. They know that tenants with animals tend to be more loyal, renewing their leases and staying longer than tenants without pets. Tenants with animals also tend to get along with their neighbors and have stronger bonds in the rental community than tenants without animals. Overall, people with animals hold the potential for being the perfect tenants. But that does not give tenants with animals carte blanche to behave in any they want. In order to be a responsible pet owner/guardian and tenant there are some things you will need to be sure to do...

Rules of the Road for Being a Good Tenant with Animals...



•Always clean up outdoors after your animal--right away. Whether it is in the common area shared by other tenants and their animals or in the general neighborhood, be sure you always bring a plastic "poop bag" or pooper-scooper when you go out with your dog. No one wants themselves or their children to step in a "surprise", so be sure to scoop the poop!





•Always clean up indoors after your animal--right away. If your animal has an accident be sure to act promptly to eliminate odors and/or stains. There are a variety of highly effective pet cleaners for both pet stains and odors on the market now, sold at pet stores and larger grocery stores. A mixture of common household items--warm water, baking soda and vinegar--will also do the trick.

•Never leave your animal unattended, home alone for extended periods of time. If you need to be away longer than the normal time for commute and work time be sure you contact a relative, friend or neighbor to come in and give food and medications, spend time with the animal, and, in the case of a dog, give exercise and bathroom time. Be sure to make these arrangements with someone you trust and give them a copy of your house key *before* a situation arises in which you need them.

•Always have appropriate arrangements made for your animals when you need to be out of town. Whether it is a business trip, vacation or a family emergency trip, be sure you have a plan in place in advance for someone to care for your animals while you're away. Whether its a pet-sitter, boarder, or friend, neighbor or family member be sure they know all the details about your pet's habits, health and preferences--and be sure to leave them your vet's contact information in case of an emergency.

•Always abide by the pet policies established by the rental property owner. Never "sneak in" animals who have not been approved to live on the premises! If you have an emergency, short-term situation where you have to pet-sit for a relative during a family emergency for instance, be sure to notify the owner or building manager. Explain the situation, letting them know it is only a temporary, short-term arrangement.

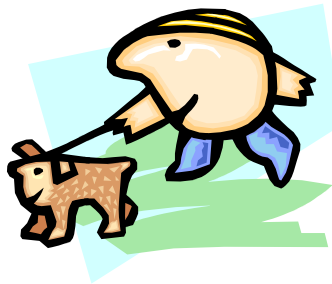
•Always resolve problems concerning your animal with your neighbors as soon as possible. If there are misunderstandings about your animal's behavior be sure you calmly and politely explain the situation to your neighbor as well as to the complex manager and/or landlord. If your neighbor's complaint is valid, acknowledge that you appreciate their position, apologize for any inconvenience, and assure them you will resolve the problem quickly. Be certain you then resolve the problem on your own or, if necessary, seek the help of an animal trainer, animal communicator, veterinarian or other professional.

**Some key things to remember about your animal
to assure that
both you--and your pet--are happy, good tenants...**



It's important that you don't have unrealistic expectations about your animal. Your pet is an animal--not a small adult human. As such your pet will be inclined to exhibit behaviors natural to its species. Cats will want to roam about the apartment or house at night, dogs may bark when the doorbell rings or howl when they hear a police siren. Some behaviors may be "trainable" and others will not. The important issue is to understand your pet's limitations. For instance...

~ Like you, your dog has to go to the bathroom more than once a day. Also like you, your dog will be unable to "hold it" for extended periods. If you are going out after work to be with friends or run errands be sure to make a pit-stop home and allow your dog to take a trip outside. Additionally, like you, your dog will not always be able to "go to the bathroom on command". Be sure you give your dog enough "out time" to go to the bathroom when s/he is ready--this could take 20 minutes or more!



~ Recognize your animal's limitations. If your dog or cat gets anxious under certain circumstances, avoid those circumstances or do something to accommodate your animal. If your animal gets upset and nervous when your schedule changes, do what's necessary to calm and reassure your pet. Spend more quality time when you *are* home, get a friend or neighbor to visit your animal when you would normally be there, leave the radio on softly while you're away, leave your pet one of your t-shirts or other personal item that has your scent on it, call your home recorder and leave a voice message in a calm, reassuring tone, etc.

~ The Basics ~



- **Your animal is your responsibility for the animal's lifetime--Never abandon your companion animal!**
- **Always keep an ID tag on your pet: your name, current address & phone number**
- **Keep litter clean and fresh. Use a pooper-scooper daily and change the litter-box with fresh litter on a regular basis.**
- **Keep a scratching post for indoor cats.**
- **Spay/neuter your pet! This will reduce tendencies for fous-smelling spraying, howling, barking and a host of other unwanted behaviors...plus you can feel good knowing you are not adding to the millions of other unwanted, homeless animals!**
- **Walk your dog at least twice (3 times if possible) each day. Take a pooper-scooper. And use it!**
- **Make sure your animal has fresh food and water every day.**
- **Get to know your neighbors and let your animal socialize with other animals in your building or complex.**
- **Be an advocate for your animal. That means try in earnest to quickly resolve any issues or problems that arise and live in harmony with the other humans and animals in your community!**

