

Factsheet – Boarding Your Dog

Happily, more and more responsible pet owners are choosing to board their pets at professional pet care facilities rather than choosing alternatives which often prove to be both costly and dangerous. Even so, many pet care facilities still experience calls from people who have been asked to care for a pet, and find that they are unable to do so safely and quite suddenly need the professional pet care facility to come to their rescue.

The Alternatives to kennels and why they are problematic?

1. Leaving them at home with other people checking in on them:

- They could inadvertently leave the gates or doors open.
- They have inadequate experience to notice if your pet becomes ill or injured.
- Your dog may not allow the person in the house because they are protecting the property.
- Your dog may destroy your property due to boredom.
- Your dog may seek to escape whilst you are gone for a period of time.

2. Leaving your dog with friends:

- Your pet could try to escape the unfamiliar environment
- Your friends property may not be secure if they are not used to having pets stay
- Your pet may be fearful or uncomfortable with major differences to home (for example, if your friends have small children and your dog is not used to that!)

3. Leaving your dogs with the Vet:

- Some pets suffer anxiety when going to the vet, they may worry they are going along for treatment!
- Not all vets can offer proper long term boarding accommodation due to space limitations, your pet is potentially being housed in the vicinity of unwell, or injured and therefore unhappy pets.

Note: It is worth considering that this may be a good option if your pet is very sick, or needs high care, or monitoring 24 hours per day. If you absolutely must leave your pet with someone else during this time, your Vet would be your only option as opposed to a pet boarding facility or Doggie Day Care.

4. Taking your dog with you on your holiday:

- Most hotels and motels will not accept dogs, or if they do, they will have very strict rules about noise and cleanliness.
- It is illegal to take your pet to any National Parks in Australia
- Pets can become sick when travelling, and this could cause a significant issue if you are staying somewhere with limited options for veterinary care
- It can limit your activities, as you may not be able to leave your dog in your Caravan or Camper to go out and do things during the day. Remember, it is an offence to leave your dog unattended in your car for any period of time!
- Watch out for parasitic infections – remember your pet can get them anywhere, anytime!

Why Should you choose a Pet Resort or Boarding Facility?

There are many factors to consider when deciding on the best option for your family pet. Choosing a Pet resort over other alternatives has many benefits! It is important to note that if you are looking at alternatives to a Pet Resort, such as a Pet Sitter, Pet Nanny, In Home Pet Boarding, or Backyard Boarding, many of the things below are not a requirement of people acting in this capacity.

- Pet Resorts / Boarding Facilities are run by industry professionals, who employ qualified staff to care for your pet.
- They have strict policies regarding vaccinations, meaning that your pet is best protected whilst they are away from home
- Pet Resorts / Boarding Facilities are licensed with their local Council and must adhere to standards such as maximum pet numbers, proper waste management and noise management procedures
- They have strict hygiene and cleaning procedures
- Pet Resorts / Boarding Facilities will provide the maximum amount of human interaction possible while your pet is away. Unlike other alternatives where a person may attend to your home and pet for 30-60 minutes per day, the great thing about a Pet Resort is that they staff are there all day long, and your pet will get plenty of interaction!
- They have secure fencing and properties, to ensure that all animals are contained and unauthorised people are prevented from entering
- Professional businesses such as Pet Resort / Boarding Facilities are registered businesses that are required to hold public liability insurance as a minimum, which offers protection for the pet and the pet owner.
- Whilst many of the alternative options are services run by one person, either in their own home or visiting the pet owners home, licensed boarding facilities such as Pet Resorts and Boarding Facilities have staff on hand at all times to care for the pets.
- Pet Resorts and Boarding Facilities have formal agreements that they enter into with the pet owner, so that the client clearly understands what is expected and agreed by both parties.

Why Choosing a Pet Boarding Facility Works!

The people who run kennels are well trained to look after your pet. Consider this; a Veterinarian may see 2500 pets a year, even a small kennel owner will see around 20,000 pets a year; that is an enormous amount of experience. They will call the vet to any pet they believe is ill and requires attention. Many times, a particular problem, eg blood in urine, or a warning sign that requires attention, will be picked up in a kennel quicker than at home. However, it is not the kennel's job to diagnose or treat your pet. If your pet requires treatment while it is boarding, you will be responsible for the account.

Remember:

- Kennel owners and their staff are passionate about what they do, they have made this their job, not their hobby.
- Business Professionalism is extremely important, and many boarding kennels adhere to a Code of Practice such as those who are Members of the Pet Industry Association of Australia.
- All reputable kennels have insurance.
- Fun for your dog! If your dog is assessed as being suitable, he/she will be able to interact and play with other friendly dogs. There is nothing better than watching a dog bursting out their owners car because they know how much fun they are about to have at the pet resort.
- Many kennels keep you up to date on how your pet is going via facebook, Instagram or email, providing the best peace of mind you can hope for.
- Most kennels offer a certain amount of individual care (playing with, talking to, petting),

Make sure you understand the rate structure for all services and hours of operation. The fee for boarding not only includes the care of your pet but the peace of mind that goes with knowing your pet is with someone you can trust.

Visit your local pet boarding facility, meet the staff, inspect the premises, ask plenty of questions! The more information you can give your chosen pet care facility, the better, as it will help them settle your dog in and know what their insecurities may be.

A Partnership

Boarding your pet is a shared responsibility. There are a few things that you must do before boarding:

- Make sure all vaccinations are current. This must be a minimum C5 for dogs.
- Your pet should be wormed beforehand and not have been exposed to any contagious diseases and have been given their usual flea and tick treatment prior to their holiday.
- Always have control of your pet – for the safety of your dog always ensure that they are on a secure lead upon arrival at the kennel.
- Be sure to inform kennel owners of any special idiosyncrasies or medical problems that are applicable to your pet, for example a fear of thunder, or a food intolerance.

Puppies usually enjoy boarding. Some kennels offer day care services so that you can leave your dog for a few hours at a time, this is the easy way to introduce your dog to boarding. After a few visits, your dog accepts this as a normal way of life.

Pet Industry Association of Australia

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Understanding The Kennel Environment

The following outlines a few things that you might notice after your dogs holiday. These things not of any concern, providing your pet is otherwise well:

- They might be tired, this is because at home they spend most of their day sleeping, whereas in the pet care facility they spend a lot more of their day playing and “talking” to their friends.
- They might be a little hoarse. Some dogs like to spend most of their day “talking” to their friends as a result their voice might be like yours after a close game of footy. Don’t worry, it will go back to normal in no time at all.
- Their poop might be a little runny. This is usually due to a change of food, or it also could be that your dog is a little stressed at being away from you. Some owners feed their dogs a huge meal when they get them home, and this can also cause runny poop.
- Weight loss, which is most commonly due to your dog being far more active in the kennel environment and also missing out on those sneaky biscuits he gets at home.

Home Again

When you pick up your dog, they will be very excited to see you (dogs do not have a sense of time – 5 minutes or 5 days, there is no difference). Do not feed them for at least six hours (even though they will act hungry) and be careful not over feed them. Also, excitement will cause him to pant a lot and feel very thirsty. Give him a few ice cubes to tide him over to feed time.

Summary of Points:

- Successful boarding depends not only upon the kennel but also on how well the owner prepares his pet for the experience. Naturally, a dog that is relaxed about meeting new people and dogs is more likely to board well.
- Food and water can cause problems when your dog is in an excited state, and they should be given plenty of time to greet you and settle in at home before a tummy full!

Remember your kennel owner and their staff are in this business because they love animals. That goes for your pet too!

To find your local PIAA member boarding kennel or pet resort please visit www.piaa.net.au/member-locator

For more information, contact the Pet Industry Association of Australia anytime by emailing us at info@piaa.net.au

Further Factsheets can be found in the public resources tab by visiting us at www.piaa.net.au

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