

Boarding Your Cat

More people are discovering the delight of living with cats. In urban areas, apartment dwellers find that cats offer companionship. In rural areas, cats still fulfill their function as rodent catchers for many households. If you are a cat owner, you are undoubtedly very attached to your furry roommate. However, there will be times when you will have to make arrangements for your cat's care when you are traveling or when you host out-of-town guests who are allergic to cats. Therefore, you should examine some of the facts about cat care that will help you to understand the advantages of boarding your cat with a Pet Care Services Association member facility.

What options are available?

It is important to remember that cats do not usually travel well. They do not usually enjoy it, nor do they adapt well to travel. Many people who try to take their cats along with them on their vacation end up spending most of their time searching for their escaped pets. Leaving your cat with friends is just as unsatisfactory. A cat must go through an adjustment period in a new environment, and this means that your cat will not look upon your friend's house as "home" for a while. Therefore, your cat may try to escape from the strange house at every opportunity or hide as a fear reaction. Most cat owners recognize that it is not fair to impose this kind of responsibility on their friends, nor is it a safe arrangement for their pets. Having a boarding facility care for your pets in your absence is, therefore, the best alternative. The best way to arrange for such care is to entrust your cat to a PCSA member pet care facility, where the security arrangements are adequate to insure that your cat will not escape, and

where the staff is trained in observing and handling the problems that might arise in your absence.

Placing your cat in a boarding facility

Stop by your local PCSA boarding facility and visit with the staff. Get acquainted with the people who will be caring for your cat. Find out if toys or bedding are welcome. Find out about the diet the facility provides. If there is a special diet that you would like your cat to adhere to, most boarding facilities will allow you to provide such food and will see to it that your cat is fed only what you request. Discuss safety features. Boarding cats requires good security to prevent escapes. Discuss any qualms you may have about boarding your cat.

The experienced staff members at a PCSA boarding facility are trained to recognize the warning signs of potential health problems, and will contact you and/or a veterinarian if they feel it is called for. Many times it is easier for the staff to detect problems while boarding than it is for the owner at home. For example, urinary problems, a warning sign that deserves attention, can more easily be detected in the boarding facility since the cat is closely supervised.

It is not, however, part of the staff's job to diagnose or to prescribe. If your cat requires veterinary aid while he/she is boarding, you should be aware that you are financially responsible for such aid. Before boarding, discuss any medications or special care your cat might need. Most boarding facilities offer a certain amount of individual care (playing with, talking to, petting) but you must be reasonable. Asking the facility to allow your cat privileges that might result in an escape is not a fair request.

Make certain that you understand the rate structure for all services and hours of operation. The fee for boarding includes, not only the care of your cat, but also the peace of mind that comes from knowing that your cat is safe and with someone you can trust.

One way of measuring the boarding facility's interest in the profession is through the facility's membership with PCSA. You can be certain that PCSA members are keeping current on the latest developments within the industry and that they truly care about your pet.

Facts to consider

Keep in mind that cats react much differently in a strange environment than dogs. Cats are instinctively solitary animals. Therefore, when confronted with strange surroundings, a cat's normal response is to withdraw physically and mentally into a protected, solitary state. For this reason, cats enjoy the "protected" feeling they get from being kenneled while in the boarding facility. Your cat will probably want to sit in the corner of the kennel and stare, until he/she feels comfortable in the new environment. Human contact does not normally accelerate this period of acclimation. It has to take place at the cat's own speed. A common reaction of cat owners to the idea of kenneling is, "My cat loves to run around." Perhaps this is true at home, but while in unfamiliar surroundings, the kennel gives the best feeling of safety. "But what about exercise?" If you have ever moved with your cat you may remember that most likely your cat found a secure confined area to hide for a while. Instead of running around, cats will use isometric exercise when in these situations. This means that when a cat has enough room to stretch, he/she can exercise every muscle in his body. When your cat is in new surroundings, he/she will undoubtedly prefer safety to space.

Immunization

Most boarding facilities have strict policies regarding immunization requirements. You should be aware of the facility's policy and you should also make sure that your cat is not exposed to any contagious diseases prior to boarding.

Understanding the kennel environment

Any animal in strange surroundings may suffer from stress. This means that the normal immune process is affected, as well as eating and digestive habits. Your PCSA member facility will do everything possible to minimize the effects of stress on your cat. For this reason, it is a good procedure for them to allow your cat to adjust to the boarding environment at their own rate. However, you can help to minimize the effects of stress by trying to make the boarding experience as pleasant as possible for your cat. Remember that the more often your cat boards, the more adjusted your cat will be to the boarding environment, and the easier the boarding process becomes for your cat.

Welcoming your cat home

After you pick up your cat from the boarding facility, let them "tell" you about their stay. Spend some time petting & talking to them. If your cat is an indoor/outdoor kitty, be sure to keep him/her inside for a day or two. Just as your cat had to adjust to the boarding facility, so will your cat need to adjust to being home. Allow your cat time to find that "at home" feeling again.

Remember, your pet boarding facility staff is in the business because they love pets. Relax and enjoy your trip!

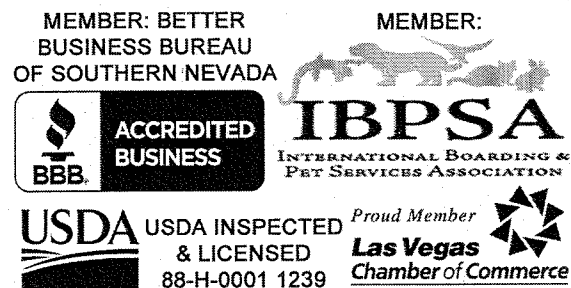
Reprinted with permission from PCSA

Your Pet's Home Away From Home
the animal inn
Las Vegas Pet Boarding Since 1958

3460 W Oquendo Road
Las Vegas, Nevada 89118
(702)736-0036

E-mail: request@animalinnlv.com

Located near Strip & McCarran Airport just West of I15
Open every day



visit our webpage:
www.animalinnlv.com



Find us on
Facebook

www.facebook.com/animalinnlv

Your Pet's Home Away From Home
the animal inn
*Las Vegas Pet Boarding
& Spa Services Since 1958*
Dogs • Cats • Birds • Exotics

let's talk about
**BOARDING
YOUR CAT**

Pet Care Services
Association

The Global Resource for Pet Care Facilities