

## POINTS TO PAWNDER SERIES

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### I Am Going On Vacation – What Should I Do With My Pet?

Every year, thousands of people who have pets go on vacation. Most of them agonize over where to leave their beloved four-legged family members while they're gone. From the tiny fish to the large dog, if you go on vacation, you need to make arrangements for your pets. Indiana-PAW hopes the information below will help citizens consider some of the many options available to them.

#### What Are My Options?

##### Maybe You Can Take Your Pet With You



- **Check to see if the place you are staying allows animals.** Many hotels, resorts and bed and breakfasts are pet friendly, and will allow you to bring your furry friend with you if you make arrangements in advance. The Humane Society of the United States lists the following websites for information regarding pet friendly accommodations:
  - DogFriendly.com
  - PetsWelcome.com
  - PetsOnTheGo.com
  - TravelDog.com
  - TravelPets.com
  - TripswithPets.com
- **Visit your veterinarian.** Schedule your pet for a physical where your vet can make sure your pet is current on his vaccinations and microchipped. Your vet can help you determine if your pet is physically up for the trip, and alert you to concerns specific to your destination (i.e., lyme-disease carrying ticks, state quarantines, etc.). Your vet can also give you the phone number for a vet you can contact when you reach your destination, should your pet become sick on the trip. And, your vet can tell you about special arrangements you should make to keep your pet healthy and safe on vacation. For example, some animals cannot safely fly in cargo holds (e.g., flat-nosed animals with short nasal passages that leave them vulnerable to oxygen deprivation and heat stroke).
- **Make sure your pets have proper identification!** Microchips and collar tags are your pets' tickets home, should they become lost. Your pets should be wearing collars at ALL times (ESPECIALLY when on vacation) that have tags with their names and your phone number. Many states also require that your pet wear an up-to-date rabies tag. Your pets should also be microchipped. If they aren't already, make an appointment with your veterinarian before you leave to have this inexpensive, easy procedure done.
- **Pack for your pet.** At a bare minimum, you'll want to pack the following items for your pet: her collar with tags, a leash, food, extra water for the car, bowls, toys, medications, a blanket or other form of bedding, a pet first-aid kit, photos of your pet in case she gets lost, your vet's regular and after-hours phone numbers, and a health certificate for proof of vaccines.
- **Travel safely.** Try to avoid air travel with your pet altogether. If you must travel by air, book a direct flight and contact the airline for their pet travel policies (i.e. carrier and boarding guidelines). If you're driving to your destination, restrain your pet inside the car via a travel

carrier (cats) or harness (dogs), and be sure to make frequent stops to allow your pet to exercise and use the bathroom.

- **Most importantly, never leave your pet unattended in the car.** Countless pets die each year as a result of this - the inside of a car can reach 120° in a matter of minutes.

#### **Board Your Pet At A Kennel Or Your Veterinarian's Office**

- Check with your veterinarian to see if they offer boarding services. If they do not, ask who they would recommend.
- Ask your relatives, friends and co-workers if they have had positive/negative experiences with local boarders.
- Once you have carefully researched and chosen a kennel:
  - Ask if they belong to the American Boarding Kennel Association;
  - Check with your Better Business Bureau to see if the kennel has any complaints filed against it; and
  - Most importantly, **tour the facility yourself and ask questions.**
- Make sure the vet/kennel watching your pet has your number and an emergency contact in case they need to reach you, as well as the name and phone number of your veterinarian.
- Notify the vet/kennel of any special needs or medications your pet may have.
- Call the vet/kennel periodically during your trip to make sure your pet is healthy and doing well.

#### **Hire A Pet Sitter**

- Ask your veterinarian, relatives, friends and co-workers if they can recommend a reputable, reliable pet sitter. You can also contact the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (1-800-296-PETS), or Pet Sitters International (336-983-9222) for a referral.
- Interview all prospective pet sitters thoroughly. Ask all candidates for proof that they are bonded and have commercial liability insurance. Request references and actually spend the time calling the references. **Remember, this may be time-consuming, but if something tragic happened to your pet while in the sitter's care and you hadn't done these things, you would never forgive yourself.**
- Ask the pet sitter if they have a back up sitter colleague, in case they are unable to make it to your home.
- Have the pet sitter meet your pet before you hire them. Watch how the pet sitter and your pet interact. Do they get along? Does the pet sitter seem calm and capable of dealing with an emergency, or does he/she seem easily flustered and stressed out?
- Make sure the sitter has your number and an emergency contact in case they need to reach you, as well as the name and phone number of your veterinarian.
- Notify the sitter of any special needs or medications your pet may have.
- Call the sitter periodically during your trip to make sure your pet is healthy and doing well.

#### **Ask A Friend Or Relative To Watch Your Pet**

- Even with a trusted friend or relative, ask them who would be a back up if they were unable to come to your house.
- If your pet goes to another home, check to see if the home has pets, and give your pet and the sitter's pet(s) a chance to interact before they have to stay together.

- Make sure that pet is comfortable with the person who will be taking care of them while you are on vacation.
- Make sure your friend/relative has your number and an emergency contact in case they need to reach you, as well as the name and phone number of your veterinarian.
- Notify your friend/relative of any special needs or medications your pet may have.
- Call your friend/relative periodically during your trip to make sure your pet is healthy and doing well.

#### **Suggested Reading**

- The Humane Society of the United States  
[http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet\\_care/caring\\_for\\_pets\\_when\\_you\\_travel/animalfriendly\\_hotel\\_accommodations.html](http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/caring_for_pets_when_you_travel/animalfriendly_hotel_accommodations.html)
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- Automobile Association of America. *Traveling With Your Pet—The AAA PetBook*.

**Important Note:** Indiana-PAW's **POINTS TO PAWNDER SERIES** is intended to provide quick tips to help citizens address common pet health and behavior questions. It is not intended to replace consultation with one's veterinarian and/or a trained behavior specialist.