

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD DO BEFORE YOU BOARD YOUR CAT!

Dr. Debra Primovic

BOARDING

Here is a checklist of 10 important steps to consider before boarding your cat. Consideration of each of these items will help you and your cat have a good boarding experience.

Interview - Interview the kennel on the phone. Find out how long they have been in business and ask for references. Use those references. Make a surprise visit or tour the facility before you schedule the boarding. Notice the place is clean, smells, check out where the cats are boarded, if they have fresh food and water and a clean litter box, and if they seem....happy.

Look for Recommendations - Talk to a few kennels before you decide where to take your cat. Also, ask your friends or neighbors where they have boarded their pet and what their experiences have been. Recommendations go along way. Don't go for the cheapest place. Go for the best place.

Determine Kennel Requirements - Does your pet need any special vaccines for this kennel? If so, what and when? Do they need a copy of the vaccine record? Can you supply your own food and treats? Can you leave any toys or his favorite blanket or bed?

Check out Kennel Staff - Find out about the consistency with the staff – is it the same person seeing your cat everyday or someone new? It is someone who knows about pets or a high school student shoveling food into the cages? Does the staff appear competent and do they look like they enjoy working with the cats?

What is the Cat's Schedule? - How often do they go out of their cage? Is that enough space to make your cat happy? If you have multiple cats, will they be together or see each other?

Feeding Instructions - Consider taking your cats own food and request that they kennel only feed his food. Many pets are fed other foods and treats and can develop gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting and or diarrhea. Your pet is already in a new environment which is most likely a bit stressful; so don't change anything you don't have to.

Contact Information - Ensure that the kennel has your numbers where you can be reached in the case of an emergency. Include your cell phone and any emergency contacts. Plan for the unexpected.

Emergency Instructions - Just in case of an emergency, leave instruction on how to proceed. During emergency hours, the kennel may use a certain veterinarian or emergency hospital. During the day, if you want your pet to go to your regular veterinarian – leave your vets name and phone number. Leave instructions on what you do and don't want and a contact number or credit card number for emergency medical care. If you are not available by phone, make sure they have the authorization to make charges if care is required. You don't want your pet "waiting" for medical care because of lack of credit card authorization.

Medical History - Obtain a copy of your pets pertinent medical record from your vet and give a copy to the kennel. Ideally, this record should include any medications, diagnosed conditions and problems . Include any behavioral quirks e.g. aggressive to other cats or if hates having his tail touched. Leave information about his tag and microchip numbers.

Leave Special Instructions - Make sure you clearly indicate any special instructions. For example, if you pet requires medications, ensure the name of the medication, dose (both in mg and number of pills, and frequency are clearly indicated. Also communicate any special foods or dietary restrictions. Keep the instructions simple with a contact number to call in the case of questions.