



Home and Pet Manual Template

{This template will allow you to put together a comprehensive manual that contains everything your sitter needs to know about your pets and home. It is meant to be customized to your needs, so please complete all relevant information and remove irrelevant sections. Once completed the manual will be a valuable resource for your next sitter and all future sitters too.}

Section 1 Personal Contact Information

1.1 Departure and Arrival Information

Although your dates have already been confirmed please also provide a copy of your itinerary including flight information (Essential if your sitter is picking you up at the airport).

1.2 Personal Contact Information

- Email
- Skype Address
- Phone/phones
- Preferred method of communication

1.3 Mail and Phone Messages

Does mail need to be collected? If so, provide location, box number and keys.

Should sitter answer the phone? Do you prefer if they take messages or leave incoming calls to go to the answering service?

Are you expecting any items to be delivered to the premises?

Section 2 Local and Emergency Contact Information

Please provide the following contact information:

House address and directions how to get there (if instructing emergency responders)

Key Local Contacts – (please provide phone numbers for the following)

House Phone Number Visitor Phone (if applicable) Neighbor/s
Landlord (if applicable)
Local Maven - the font of all local knowledge Standby House Sitters (if available)
House Cleaner
Gardener Plumber Electrician
Maintenance Person Automobile Mechanic
Home Insurance Agent Automobile
Insurance Agent Home Security Contact
Cable / Internet
Electricity Company

Emergency Contact Numbers

Veterinary Family Doctor Police
Ambulance Hospital
Fire Department

Items to consider

- Hospital / Clinic - directions to get there
- Are emergency contacts English speaking?
- Are there any language issues to be addressed?

Section 3 Pet Operation Manual

3.1 General Information

It is a good idea to have all of your pet's information in one place. Consider

including:

- Immunization and medication records (if not with the Vet)
- Details of current medication (include precise dosage, frequency and where to procure extra if needed)
- Copy of pet license
- Microchip, tattoo and lost pet registry information

3.2 An Introduction to Your Pets

Give a brief biography of each pet - provide a history and an insight to your pet's personality and behavior. What are their routines, rules and quirks? Please review the list below and explain the relevant ones for each pet.

Items to Consider:

- Do your pets live indoor / outdoor or both?
- Are your pets socialized with people and other animals?
- Do they have any aggressive tendencies?
- Do they have a history of biting people or other animals?
- Is there anywhere they do not like being touched or stroked?
- Are your pets afraid of thunderstorms / fireworks / vacuum cleaners / or have other anxieties?
- Do your pets have favorite hiding places?
- Are there any daily routines that need to be observed?
- Do they have a tendency to escape the property? Where do they go, will they come back on their own?
- Do your pets have quirks or bad habits (spraying, puking, peeing, shoe fetishes, scratching furniture etc.
- Are there any types of people they do not like?
- Are your pets' house trained?
- Litter box procedure - where do you dispose of the used litter?
- Maximum time your pets can be left alone?

3.3 Key Command words for Dogs

What are the key command words/gestures your pets understand? For Example: Come, sit, drop it, out, off etc.

3.4 Veterinary Hospital Clinic

It is recommended that the Veterinary Treatment Authorization form be filled out in case of emergencies. Other items to consider include:

- Do you have a pet carrier for your pet?
- Does the pet travel in the car well?
- Is there any after-hours emergency medical care available in case of an emergency?

3.5 Health Issues or Medications

Describe any health issues your pet has and any medications that need to be administered. Items to

Consider:

- Is your pet's vaccinations and worming up to date?
- Are any flea or tick preventions required?
- Is anti-venom available if needed?
- Do your Pets have any skin issues i.e. hot spots?
- Do your Pets have any other health issues to be aware of?

If medications need to be administered.

- What is the medication procedure and dosage?
- Name of medication and exact strength?
- Replacement source of medication?

3.6 Diet and Feeding Instructions

Describe your pets' feeding routine, include proportions and how the food is prepared. Please review the list below and explain the relevant ones for each pet.

Items to Consider:

- Do your pets have dietary allergies?
- Is there a pecking order followed when feeding?
- What is the feeding routine i.e. type of food, amounts, and times of feeding?
- What do your pets drink?
- Do your pets require a special diet, supplements, or vitamins?
- Do your pets have a weight problem that needs to be managed?
- Is human food allowed?
- Pet treats? If so when and how many?
- Is feeding at the table allowed?
- Are there things to watch for - eating garbage, scrounging, begging, stealing other's food, etc.?

3.7 Dog Walking Routine

Describe your dog walking routine and any issues that could be encountered, items to consider:

- Does your pet listen to instructions? If so, what are they?
- How often do the dogs get walked and at what time of day?
- Where do the dogs like to be walked - how adventurous are they?
- Are there any exercise restrictions?
- Have the dogs received obedience training - is there any training routine?

3.8 Sleeping Routines

Give a description of your pets sleeping routines. Do they sleep in a kennel, next to your bed, etc.?

3.9 Grooming Information

Give instructions on how to groom your pets. Items to consider:

- What are the daily or weekly grooming requirements?
- Do the dog(s) like to swim or be bathed?
- Do your pets have eye, ear, or teeth problems
- Where do you keep grooming supplies?

3.10 House Automobile and Pool Rules

Please let the sitter know what the rules are when it comes to your pet's interaction with the furniture, pool and the automobile.

Items to Consider:

- Any rooms or areas that are off limits to pets?
- Are the pets allowed on furniture, carpets, beds, or tables?
- Dogs allowed in the pool?
- Pets allowed in the car; do they like to travel?
- Other rules?

3.11 Pet Supply Information

Please indicate where your pet supplies are located and where to restock if required.

- pet food, treats, chewies
- catnip
- collars, leads, muzzles
- toys, balls, scratch posts
- pooper scooper, bags, litter
- travel boxes, blankets and carriers

How often does your pets' bedding require cleaning?

3.12 Pet Safety & Contentment

Give your Sitter any additional information to help keep your pet safe and happy.

For example: "Be aware of cars while walking as the dogs are NOT traffic smart and will walk in front of cars". Or "Foxy loves to cuddle and to sit on your lap in the evening".

Section 4 Home Information

4.1 House Rules

Please let your Sitter know your house rules.

Visitor's policy

Please state your policy regarding visitors. This policy applies not only to potential guests of the Sitters but also to the friends or family of yourself, the homeowner.

Example: "The dogs are very unpredictable when people come to visit, and we would rather you not have anyone visit the house to avoid any trouble. A friend does use the pool, but we have asked her to not to drop in while we are away".

Out of Bounds Contents

Please make a list of items you do not wish your house sitter to use. For example: computer, exercise equipment, fine bone china, etc. Do not worry about offending the Sitter, it is best to make your wishes clear and this way they will not accidentally damage something of sentimental value to you.

Out of Bounds Rooms

Make note of any rooms or areas on your property you do not wish the house sitter or the pets to use.

Items Requiring Specific Care

If there are any items or furniture in your home that requires special care or attention, please let your Sitter know.

Example: "When cleaning the kitchen, please note that as the kitchen appliances are stainless steel they need to be cleaned very carefully using a non-scouring cloth, so you do not scratch the surfaces".

4.2 Computer Usage

Can the sitter use your computer and printer if they need to?

Items to Consider:

- Computer account and WIFI passwords
- Reset procedure for Wi-Fi
- Contact information for internet service provider

Example: "Feel free to use the computer – We have set up a guest account and the password for access is 'Password'. We have a Wi-Fi router – network is '.....' and the password is '.....'"

4.3 Kitchen

Items to Consider:

- Perishable foodstuffs to be used?
- What items do you require upon your return (eggs, cheese, milk, bread etc.)?
- Cooking gas supply. If by tank/bottle what is the change out procedure and where do you purchase replacements/refills?

4.4 Entertainment Systems

Sometimes entertainment systems can cause extreme discombobulation. Help maintain sanity by providing detailed instructions on how to navigate this complex subject.

Items to Consider:

Operation instructions for TV and entertainment system components

Example: "To view the TV, press power on black TV remote. You also have to switch on the silver Digibox. Use the silver remote control for channel selection, volume etc. The TV is a smart TV so by pressing 'source' you can get Wifi, computer, etc."

4.5 Appliances

Household appliances come in all makes and sizes with varied controls. Let your Sitter know any unusual "features" of your appliances. You may know that the oven does not work if the clock is not set, however your sitter doesn't, and might think that your oven is no longer working.

Items to Consider:

- Kitchen appliances including stove, ovens, dishwasher, and microwave
- Laundry facilities (including clothesline location)
- Place all operation instructions in a convenient location for the Sitters reference
- Explain any nuances or quirks of your appliances

4.6 Cleaning

Items to Consider:

- Location of cleaning supplies, including brooms
- Location of vacuum cleaner and operation
- Cleaning responsibilities of the House sitter

4.7 Indoor plants Instructions for feeding and watering your indoor plants and where supplies are located.

Section 5 Household Systems and Services

5.1 Security systems and cameras

Many homes have exterior security systems and alarms, so be sure to explain the system and include:

- Location of cameras
- Location of nay motion sensor lights
- How the alarm system works
- Code for the alarm

If your security system includes interior cameras you need to disclose this to your sitter/sitters in advance. Being recorded and monitored is often perceived as an invasion of a person's privacy. The sitter/homeowner relationship is built on mutual trust, and they will most likely ask that the cameras be turned off.

5.2 Water

A description of the water system is helpful. Items to Consider:

- Is the water potable? Does it require boiling? If delivered what is the schedule?
- Main valve locations, how does your system work?
- Does the water get cut off regularly? If so, where is a backup supply?
- Water heater type and location
- Are there any pumps to be monitored?
- Are there any restrictions on water usage?
- Water filters or softening systems- location / monitoring required?

5.3 Electrical and Gas

Items to Consider:

- Electrical breaker box(es) location(s)
- Back-up generator - location and operation details
- Are there any solar systems that require monitoring?

5.4 Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Leave your sitter detailed instructions regarding the heating and/or air-conditioning systems in your home.

5.5 Recycling and Garbage

Items to Consider:

- Garbage: is there pick up? If so, what days and if not, where is the garbage disposed?
- Recycling: is there recycling? If so, what is recyclable and what is the procedure?

5.6 Other Miscellaneous

Are there any other things about the house that need to be mentioned?

Items to Consider:

- Sewage or septic system - any details worth noting?
- Are there any sump pumps to monitor?
- Garage door opener code / override
- Gate opener remotes / override
- Location of tools for minor repairs - hammer screwdrivers, wrenches

Section 6 External Service Providers

Please inform the Sitter of anyone who will have access to the property. This includes household staff, gardeners, and pool or maintenance people. Does the Sitter have to be present when the staff are on site, or can the staff enter and work independently?

If there is regular staff, please provide the Sitter with a work schedule so that they know when to expect them. Items to consider:

- Names and contact information
- What days of the week do they work?
- What are the expected hours of work?
- Has the staff been prepaid?
- Does the house sitter need to be present when they are working on the premises?
- Does the performance of the staff need to be monitored by the sitter?

Section 7 All About Automobiles

7.1 Homeowners Vehicle

If the Sitter is using your vehicle during the assignment, provide instructions regarding its operation. Also inform the Sitter about any driving or equipment regulations specific to your area. Do you have any restrictions regarding their use of the vehicle?

Completing an Authorization for Automobile Use form is a good idea, especially if your country operates in a language the Sitter is not fluent in.

Items to consider:

- Authorization for Automobile Use form required?
- What is the procedure in case of accident? (i.e. do nothing until the insurance agent shows up etc.)
- What type of fuel does your vehicle require (Gasoline / Diesel / Grade)
- Remote control devices?
- Any quirks or features - i.e. hard to get out of 4WD, or a windshield so tinted it is hard to see out in a rainstorm or at night
- Specific licensing requirements (i.e. local permit or International Drivers License)
- Is there anything that needs to be monitored i.e. Does the oil level need to be checked regularly because the vehicle burns oil?

7.2 Vehicle Maintenance

If the assignment is for an extended period, you may want the Sitter to perform maintenance on your vehicles (even if they are not using them). Give the Sitter instructions regarding the care of your vehicles

Items to consider:

- Does the vehicle need to be started on a regular basis
- Cleaning of the interior and or exterior
- Taking the vehicle in for regular scheduled maintenance

7.3 General Automobile Considerations

If the Sitter is providing their own transportation there are still considerations that need to be addressed Items to consider:

- Is parking available?
- Do they need a visitors parking permit?
- Are there any specific driving requirements - i.e. safety items that must be in vehicle by law (reflective vest, warning triangle etc.) - where are the radar traps?

Section 8 Helping the House sitters

8.1 Getting Connected

One of the huge benefits of housesitting from the Sitters perspective is getting plugged into a community. So, any help you can give will be appreciated.

Items to consider:

- Local service clubs
- Cool people to meet including the Local Maven (font of all local knowledge)
- Local community websites
- Local expat meeting places

8.2 Spare Keys

Inform the Sitter of the location of spare keys in case they accidentally get locked out. The Key Contact person (no pun intended) is a good candidate for keeping spare keys.

8.3 Provisioning

Items to consider:

- What supermarkets do you use?
- Where is the local convenience store for eggs, milk, bread, etc.?
- Is there a local farmers market?
- Location of the local bakery, butcher, fish market?
- Where is the closest Bank or ATM?
- Where is the local Hardware store?
- Where are the local gas / service stations?

8.4 Tourist information

Items to consider:

- Provide any books you have on the area
- Recommend good and/or affordable places to eat nearby
- Where to go for a special occasion
- Locations of museums, cathedrals, or historic sites

8.5 Getting Around

Items to consider:

- Provide maps, transportation routes and area information
- What is typical cab or bus fares?

8.6 Basic Supplies and Storage

Tell your sitter where they can find basic supplies, clean linens and storage for their belongings.

- Basics like soap and toilet paper
- Space in the kitchen for sitter's foodstuffs
- Space in the closet for sitter's clothes
- Is there a safe the sitters can use?
- Location of clean bed linen and towels

Section 9 Grounds Maintenance and Pool

9.1 Composting

If you compost, please give instructions to your Sitter on what you would (and would not) like to have added to your compost.

9.2 Pool Maintenance

Provide detailed instructions for maintaining the pool. Place a copy of the instructions in a plastic zip bag in the pool room for easy reference.

Items to consider:

- Location of supplies
- Schedules and procedures for chemicals and cleaning
- Contact information for pool maintenance

9.3 Lawn and Garden Care

If you require your Sitter to maintain the lawn and garden, provide them with a set of keys to the garden shed and instructions of what needs to be done in the garden and how often.

Items to consider:

- Location of lawn mower and weed whacker, leaf blower etc.
- Types of fuel and location i.e. "2 stroke, stored in the shed"
- Garden tools location - hoses, watering cans, rakes, wheelbarrow etc.
- Watering and feeding requirements?
- Location of hoses and watering cans?
- Watering restrictions to consider?
- Any pests to watch out for? Leaf cutter ants or Spynx moths

9.4 Bird and Animal Feeders

Items to consider

- Any feeding requirements for birds
- Any other visitor's sitters need to be aware of (Skunks, Snakes, Spiders, Squirrels)

Section 10 Safety and Security

Set your sitter up for success; by ensuring they have all the tools and information to properly secure and protect your home, property and pets.

10.1 Security Systems

Security systems can be tricky and a source of frustration for the sitter. This can be avoided by providing the sitter with detailed instructions on the use of the security system.

Items to consider:

- Make arrangements with the security company for the House sitter (Codes or passwords)
- Provide Security company contact information
- Provide exact operating instructions for the security system
- Provide pass codes to override system

10.2 Emergency Equipment & Supplies

Provide your sitter with the tools to deal with emergency situations. Provide instructions where your home emergency equipment & supplies are located.

Items to consider:

- Emergency kits
- First aid kits
- Fire extinguisher locations
- Smoke alarms - are they monitored? Do they need new Batteries?
- Flashlights, candles in case of power outage

10.3 General Hazards

Items to consider

- Are there any chemicals or pesticides stored away or incorrectly disposed of?
- Are there any known faults that may pose a hazard?
- Is there anything that could cause a slip, trip or a fall?

10.4 Adverse Weather Preparation

Please provide the Sitter with procedures to deal with winter storms or hurricane preparedness. It is also useful to pass on any useful websites for monitoring local weather conditions. This is especially useful in areas that experience tornados, hurricanes and hailstorms.

Example: If raining hard please make sure the dining room and the spare bedroom windows are closed. Also make sure the drain on the patio at the back of the house is not blocked with leaves.

OK that's it well done! You now have all the information your Sitter could ever need, which will make it easier for them and for you as you know all the bases are covered. For more information go to: www.DanandKathleen.com