

Tips to keep your pets healthy, happy when traveling over March Break

By Sam Odrowski

March Break is nearing its end, but the Ontario SCPCA and Human Society have some tips to keep pets happy and healthy during an increased time of travel.

Over the March Break, as pet owners go on vacations, their furry friends are often left with a close friend, pet sitter or boarding kennel.

If choosing a pet sitter, make sure you ask about what training the sitter has and if they have insurance.

It's important to also think about if they have a backup, in case they become ill.

Ask for references and talk to past clients. It's also important for the pet sitter to meet your furry friend beforehand to make sure they're a good fit, said the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society in a press release.

When searching for a boarding facility, it's best to first ask a friend, your veterinarian, or dog trainer for a recommendation.

Visit the kennel and pay attention to whether it looks and smells clean and if it has been designed with your furry friend's comfort in mind, said the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society. Ask about the animal to staff ratio, staff training and if animals are monitored after hours. Find out what a day in the life there would look like for your pet ask about feeding schedules, exercise, enrichment and wellness checks. What vaccinations are required? Be sure to ask about protocols and available veterinary care in the event of a health concern or emergency.

Whether you're asking a friend to stay in your home, or seeking professional pet sitting or boarding services, the Ontario SCPCA and Human Society recommends you always have a written contract spelling out services and fees.

Be sure to tell your pet's caregiver about your animal's likes, dislikes, fears, habits, medical conditions, medications, and routines. Outline feeding and care instructions and be sure to leave contact information for your veterinarian, as well as an alternative emergency contact who can make decisions about your pet's health if you can't be reached, said the Ontario SCPCA and Human Society.

Safeguarding your pet before heading off for vacation is important as well.

Ensure your pet is up to date on vaccinations and your microchip address is up to date. If your pet isn't microchipped, this is a simple and effective way to help ensure you are reunited with your pet if they become lost. Now is also a great time to consider pet insurance to help cover those unforeseen veterinary bills and help your furry friends stay healthy, said the Ontario SCPCA and Human Society.

For more travel planning tips, visit the Ontario SPCA's blog at ontariospca.ca/blog.