



# PSI's Recommended Quality Standards for Excellence in Pet Sitting

The mission of Pet Sitters International (PSI) is to educate professional pet sitters and to promote, support and recognize excellence in pet sitting. *PSI's Recommended Quality Standards for Excellence in Pet Sitting* reflect the values that exemplify industry leaders and serve to establish a high level of professionalism for our industry. PSI member pet sitters should use these set of guidelines in decisions that affect business ethics, pet care, procedures and professionalism.

## Best Business Practices

### The sitter:

- obtains any business license and/or permit required to operate a pet-sitting business as set forth by their state, province, county, or city.
- maintains current and adequate liability and bonding insurance that covers all services provided.
- can provide proof of a clear criminal history, when requested.
- willingly provides client references, when requested.
- utilizes a legally compliant, written service contract to clarify services, fees, visit schedule, time allocated per visit and all other agreements, thereby establishing clear expectations in advance for both parties.
- is well-educated in the disciplines of pet sitting and takes advantage of educational trainings and continuing education to increase pet-care and business knowledge.
- maintains active membership in professional and educational associations, such as PSI.

### Additionally, the sitter:

- visits the client's home before accepting a pet-sitting assignment to meet the pets, obtain/record detailed information about specific needs and complete the pet-sitting services agreement.
- provides materials or online access to descriptions of services and fees.
- takes precautions to make sure a client's absence from home is not detectable because of careless actions or disclosures by the sitter.
- has systems in place to ensure the security of home keys in their possession.
- implements appropriate sanitation practices and takes reasonable precautions to limit the spread of communicable diseases and/or cross-contamination between households.
- confirms client's return and has prearranged for continued care should a client's return be delayed or detained by emergency.
- has a contingency plan for pet care in case of inclement weather, disaster, or personal illness.
- has an emergency plan in place, including veterinary contact information, should a pet become ill or injured in their care.
- solicits service feedback from clients and responds appropriately.
- responds to client inquiries and complaints promptly.

### When using staff sitters, the pet-sitting business owner:

- properly classifies staff as employees or contractors, adhering to any federal, state or provincial laws, and ensures staff members understand their classification.
- provides references, screens pet sitters adequately and, upon request, provides proof of clear criminal history of any company representative assigned to enter the homes of pet owners.
- provides initial and ongoing training for its employees and/or establishes standards that its independent contractors must meet to qualify for pet-sitting assignments, while adhering to any federal, state or provincial laws regarding staffing and employment practices.
- practices fair recruitment, hiring and management practices, ensuring they do not discriminate against a person due to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, disability, veteran/military status, age, genetic information or any protected classification established by law.
- works to foster an inclusive work environment with clear anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and ensures adherence of these policies to ensure the safety of all staff.

## Animal Care & Stewardship

### The sitter:

- learns as much as possible about the routines, behaviors and needs of animals in their care and documents specific care instructions provided by the pet owners.
- has adequate experience in caring for pets and is knowledgeable in pet behavior and pet first aid to best protect the safety and well-being of pets in their care.
- understands and upholds local ordinances and laws applicable to animals in their service areas, including policies regarding animal abuse and neglect.

## Ethical Conduct & Professional Behavior

### The sitter:

- exhibits courtesy and professionalism in all dealings with customers, staff and industry colleagues to positively represent their business and the pet-sitting industry.
- conducts business with honesty and integrity and observes all federal, state and local laws pertaining to business operations.
- refrains from slander of competitors, peers, industry organizations and affiliates, and follows the appropriate venues to provide constructive feedback and/or address concerns in a respectful manner.
- demonstrates ethical standards in all business transactions.