

## **What happens to my pets when I'm gone?**

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If you've ever had a serious accident, or been laid up with an injury, this has probably crossed your mind. If you're like me, and are child-free, this might be an even bigger concern. After all, our pets are a part of our lives, but to our pets, we are their entire life, their entire world. Of course, we want to make sure they're well cared for in the event that we are no longer able to care for them. In this blog post, I'll lay out some concrete actions you can take to ensure their care if you no longer can.

- 1) Pet Alert Card. Carry a pet alert card in your purse or wallet. This will alert authorities that you have pets at home that need care. Make sure you include the following:
  - a) Pet's Name.
  - b) Your address and access instructions.
  - c) Name and number for at least 2 emergency contacts.
  - d) Any medical conditions or medications your pet might be on.
- 2) Pet Profile Sheet. A good place to keep this would be on your refrigerator clearly visible to any first responders or emergency contacts to easily find. Make sure you include the following on your sheet:
  - a) For each pet in your home, you should have a photo with their name.
  - b) Any information pertinent to the care of your pet including the name and contact details for your pet sitter.
  - c) What are your pets' habits? Likes and dislikes?
  - d) Food. Include the brand and quantity they eat and the location of their food in your home.
  - e) Medical conditions and medications taken.
  - f) Veterinary information. If you want to go an extra step, get copies from your vet of their release to treat form for each of your emergency contacts.
  - g) Behavior. What triggers them? Are there situations they should avoid? Are they good with other pets? Are they a flight risk? Where do they like to hide in your home?
- 3) Caregivers. Who do you want to care for your pets if you are hospitalized or pass away?
  - a) Make sure you have a conversation with each of these people. I recommend choosing at least 2 so you have a plan A and a plan B.

- b) If there is no one in your life you can leave the care of your pet to, there are organizations that can help. I also recommend reaching out to your pet sitter and having a conversation with them.
- 4) Consider more formal options. A lawyer or estate planner can help you navigate your options.
  - a) After speaking with the person you would like to take ownership of your pet, add them to your Will or Living Trust. Add both your plan A person and your plan B person.
  - b) Create a separate Pet Trust for your pet's care.
  - c) Interview organizations that help find pet's homes when their owners die. Choose one and work through the process of getting established with them.

Planning for our own passing isn't something any of us enjoy doing. However, you can gain great peace of mind from knowing that at least one small part of your estate, maybe even the most important part, will be taken care of after you're gone. If you'd like to chat about these options, please don't hesitate to shoot me a message. I am actually set up to care for a couple of my client's pets in the event of their passing. For these client's, they know that I love their pets as if they are my own. In the event that something happens to them, I will either fold them into my home, or find a home that is going to best suit their needs and provide exceptional love and care for their remaining days.

"I hope to make people realize how totally helpless animals are, how dependent on us, trusting as a child must that we will be kind and take care of their needs." – James Herriot