

Questions You Should Ask Any Potential Pet Sitter or Dog Walker

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Before securing the services of a professional pet-sitting or dog-walking company, an initial meeting (often called a “meet and greet” or “initial consultation”) should be scheduled. This interview allows the pet sitter to meet with you in your home, interact with your pet(s), and discuss needed services and their business policies. Some companies offer this initial consultation at no charge, while others may charge a nominal fee.

Pet Sitters International (PSI) recommends asking these seven important questions:

1. Does the company have the proper business license/permit, if required by your state/city/province? *Rules and regulations vary regarding what is required to legally operate a business. Any pet sitter or dog walker you use should have a valid business license, if required where you live. Also ensure they have the proper licenses/permits for any additional services they may offer, such as boarding in their home.*

2. Is the company insured and bonded? *Ask for proof of coverage. PSI members have access to group rates on policies for pet-care businesses from PSI's Preferred Provider and are provided insurance cards. If a pet sitter is insured by another provider, confirm their policy has adequate coverage and is customized for pet-care businesses.*

3. Can the pet sitter provide proof of a recent background check demonstrating their clear criminal history? *PSI encourages pet sitters to have current background checks (within one year) on themselves and any staff sitters. Please note that, depending upon where you are located, there may be regulations that prohibit the sharing of background checks (particularly for staff), but pet sitters will be able to provide details on the type of background check and screening company used.*

4. Will the pet sitter provide client references? *Professional pet sitters should be able to provide client references upon request. This may include providing the contact information of current clients you can reach out to and/or directing you to verified online reviews of their company.*

5. Does the pet sitter use a pet-sitting services agreement or contract? *A well-written contract outlines the details of the services that will be provided, including dates and amount of time that will be spent with pets, to ensure both you and the pet sitter understand and have agreed upon the services that will be provided. The contract will also document important contact information, company policies, and note the specific care needs of the pets in your household.*

6. Is the pet sitter a Certified Professional Pet Sitter® and/or what type of training—such as pet first aid—have they had? *It's important that the pet sitter or dog walker you choose has up to date pet-care knowledge, including pet first aid training. Many pet sitters also pursue earning the Certified Professional Pet Sitter® designation from PSI, which is a federally trademarked certification mark awarded to pet-care professionals who have successfully passed the certification exam, created exclusively for the pet-sitting industry.*

7. Is the pet sitter a member of a professional organization or educational association such as PSI? *Membership and active participation in an educational/professional association is another sign of a pet-care provider's commitment to their profession—and membership provides them with access to the most up-to-date educational resources and business tools to help them provide the best possible pet-care services.*



Searching for a local professional pet sitter or dog walker? Visit www.petsit.com/locate to enter your ZIP/Postal code and view the profiles of professional pet-care companies serving your area. For more tips on selecting a pet sitter, [visit the PSI website](http://www.petsit.com/locate).