

**ROLAND'S OFFICIAL
GUIDE TO FINDING
AND SELECTING A
DOG SITTER**

a quick reference guide for
evaluating potential dog
sitters for your silly goose



EVALUATING WHICH SETTING MAY BE BEST FOR YOUR DOG

Home Pet Sitter

Your pet is not up-to-date on vaccines or is not spayed/neutered

Your pet has separation anxiety or has trouble adapting to new spaces

Your dog is reactive or afraid of other animals or people

Your pet needs to be under constant supervision due to blindness, a recent surgery or health complication

You'll be away for a few hours, for a day trip or longer trip.

Boarding Facility

Your dog is up-to-date on vaccines and is spayed/neutered

Your pet is well-socialized and does not exhibit extreme resource guarding (food, toys, people)

Your pet does not have separation anxiety and is not reactive towards people, barriers or animals.

Your pet adapts quickly to new environments/people and does not have significant supervision requirements or health concerns

You'll be away for at least a few days.

Daycare Facility

You'll be away for a few hours (less than one day)

PET SITTER EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

What dog training or behavior certification and training do they have?

Are they CPR, First Aid and/or Fear Free Certified?

For in-home sitters: Are they comfortable staying in your home?

For sitters who provide overnight care in their own home: Do they have a secure fence? Are there other pets in their home?

Do they have references you can contact?

Are they able to accommodate your pet's needs? For this, you'll want to have a list of your pet's needs and wants, including exercise routine, feeding schedule, medications, etc.

Can they meet your pet in advance?

Will they stay overnight or visit throughout the day?

How often will they take your dogs out to use the bathroom or enrichment activities?

What experience do they have with your dog or your type of dogs?

BEST PRACTICES & SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Set clear expectations with your pet sitter. Communicate them early and often.

!! Are there certain activities or treats your dog cannot partake in? Are there certain rooms that are off limits? Do you expect your dog's GPS collar to stay on 24/7? How long are you comfortable for your pet to be left alone for (if at all)? Document all of these expectations and communicate them firmly and clearly.

Leave a list of your dog's daily routine, emergency vet, emergency phone numbers, etc.

If your dog has a GPS collar, make sure it is charged, give instructions for charging and if the sitter can or cannot take it off.

Let your neighbors and personal vet know that you will be out of town and share your pet sitter's information with them.

Have a meet and greet with potential pet sitters to see how your dogs are treated while in their presence.

!! Pay close attention to how they react and engage with your dog(s).
• Do they help the dogs settle?
• How do they help the dogs feel comfortable with their presence?

YOUR DOG'S EXPERIENCE

Will the pet be brought on walks or otherwise leave the property? If so, how will they ensure that your pets do not get lost or escape?

How does the pet sitter reward dogs? Alternatively: "If my dog <insert unwanted or undesirable behavior here>, what do you do?"

At night, will the dogs be crated or will they have free roam to sleep anywhere?

For sitters who provide overnight care in their own home: will dogs be able to free roam during the day, or will there be restricted areas?

SAFETY, COMMUNICATION & TRANSPARENCY

Will they provide regular updates?

Pose an emergency scenario(s) and see how they would respond.

!! Examples: If the AC goes out on a super-hot day, what will they do?

• If your dog begins vomiting multiple times a day, how will they handle it?

• If your dog escapes, what will they do?

Does the pet sitter have animals of their own? Will they be present with your dogs?

What is their approach to communicating with clients when there is an emergency (environmental, injury, sickness, escape, etc.)?

Will they share if a dog has died or been seriously injured in their care?

If the pet sitter needs to leave while watching your pets, how long will they be gone for?

HOW TO GRADE IF YOUR PET SITTER DID A GOOD JOB

- ✓ Regular updates, pictures, notes on how each pet was doing each day
 - ✓ The sitter was at your property for the agreed upon times using doorbell camera / alarm notifications.
 - ✓ The sitter followed your instructions regarding pets leaving the property.
 - ✓ No other guests were allowed to enter the property or interact with your pets.
 - ✓ The pet sitter maintained a clean environment while you were away and the house is in order when you return
 - ✓ Your dog's temperament is happy and excited upon your return. There are no indications of fear, stress or illness.
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- ✗ Lack of regular reports or updates
 - ✗ Based on doorbell cameras or alarm notifications, the pet sitter's arrival / departure differs from what was agreed on. (Additionally, monitor if the animals unexpectedly left the property at any point or if unexpected people were let into your home).
 - ✗ Pee puddles, vomit, or other pet waste in the house when you return, indicating the pet sitter did not maintain the home or closely monitor the dogs.
 - ✗ Your dog appears stressed, fearful or anxious (outside the norm). There are signs of weight loss, lethargy, or other indicators of malnutrition, lack of enrichment or sickness.

SOURCES

www.humanesociety.org/resources/how-choose-reliable-pet-sitter%20

www.pethub.com/articles/77027/7-critical-questions-to-ask-a-new-pet-sitter%20

www.whole-dog-journal.com/lifestyle/dog-sitter-checklist/%20

www.animalhumanesociety.org/resource/pet-sitting-vs-boarding-which-right-your-pet

SILLY GOOSE

fighting for
serious change.

Roland's Silly Goose Crew was founded to remember our dog Roland, who tragically died at an Austin dog daycare in 2022. **Our mission is simple yet powerful: to advocate for change in the dog care industry and empower dog parents to make more informed decisions for the care of their dogs.** We want to make a difference in the lives of dogs and their families in Austin, and beyond. Our ultimate goal is to create more consistent safety standards and push for more accountability in the industry, so that no family ever has to experience the same tragedy as Roland's.

Our hope is that this guide will help dog parents across Austin make informed decisions about the care of their four-legged family members. Roland was our first dog and it was so overwhelming trying to figure out what was best for him. We compiled this questionnaire from a variety of sources as a "jump start" guide for you.

This is not intended to be a checklist, nor is this intended to dissuade you from hiring a pet sitter for your pups. Pet sitters can play an important role for dog families everywhere, so we believe it is important to hold them to a higher standard.

This should act as a tool to think through the factors that are most important to you and your family so you can make a more informed decision for your silly goose.



Roland's Silly Goose Crew is a registered
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