



## Policies & Helpful Hints for Pet and House Sitting Clients

The Sitters is a pet sitting company committed to providing pets with loving, personal, professional, safe care in their own home. We also offer house sitting services for people who do not have pets, but still would like monitoring and care for their home when they are away. The following information will help you prepare for and know what to expect from our services.

### Initial Interview & Client Account Activation

The initial interview is a wonderful opportunity for you to meet your primary and backup sitters, and for us to meet your pets and orient to your home. Together we discuss and document your pets' care needs and daily routine. We also gather information to help us detail your client profile and to care for your home while you're away. Typically, the interview lasts about an hour. There is a \$28 charge for the initial interview which is payable during our meeting or before your first pet sitting visit. Initial interviews are required for all new pet and house sitting clients before services begin.

### Reservations

After the initial interview, we set up your client account. This allows you to confirm your schedule and make future service reservations in a variety of ways:

1. **Online reservations** – To make online reservations go to our website at [www.the-sitters.com](http://www.the-sitters.com). On our home page, you can find our **Client Portal** in two locations: 1) on the far right side of the navigational menu just under our phone number, or, 2) on the lower left corner of the home page. In either location, choose the link for **Current Clients** under the **Client Portal**. The prompt will ask you for your username (the primary email address you have asked us to keep on file), and your password. The first time you log on to the site, your zip code will be your password. Please customize the password after logging in for the first time. Not only can you make reservations online, but you can see your live schedule too. If you see your visits on the calendar online, no need to call to confirm, we will be there. If you cannot see your visits online, call us at 253-661-7488 to verify your reservation request.
2. **Phone reservations** –If your pet sitting request has plenty of advance notice, please call The Sitters' office at 253-661-7488. **DO NOT** contact your sitter directly. In order to ensure that you are properly scheduled for your reservation and that your sitter will be insured and bonded at the time of service, you must reserve visits through our office. We are not responsible for any issues or damages if your reservation was made by a call directly to your sitter.

We do accept some shorter notice reservations if your sitter is available. If you need short notice or same day service, you can check our availability by calling or texting our cell phone: 206-979-6005. If Jill is off or out of town, an email will be sent to all clients with the phone numbers of the staff member(s) in charge while she is away.

3. **Email reservations**—To email requests for new reservations or to change or cancel existing reservations, please email our office directly at [jw\\_edson@msn.com](mailto:jw_edson@msn.com). Once received, we will respond to your request as soon as possible. (All email reservations must be made through our office, not directly with your sitter.)

4. **Text reservations**—To text requests for new reservations or to change or cancel existing reservations, please text to our cell phone number: 206-979-6005. Do NOT send texts to our main office phone or to your sitter's cell phone. If Jill is off or out of town, an email will be sent to all clients with the appropriate reservation text cell phone numbers of the staff member(s) in charge while she is away. Remember to include your first and last name and actual dates related to your request when texting about reservations.

Reservations are on a first come/first serve basis. While we make every effort to satisfy your sitting requests, there may be times when our schedule is at maximum capacity. Under no circumstances should you assume you are covered without direct confirmation from our office.

Before you leave for your trip, make sure to let us know by phone, email or written note in our communication spot...where you are going, how you can be reached, and what day/time you plan to return. It is also important to tell us in advance of your trip if there are any changes in your keys, security codes, care instructions, or emergency contact persons.

## Pet Care

- Please have plenty of pet food, medications, collars, leashes, poop bags, potty pads, litter, household goods/cleaning supplies on hand during pet sitting visits. Plan an extra few days of food and supplies beyond what you think will be needed. Some of our clients experience significant travel delays and are unable to return home as originally planned. *(Errand services to pick up extra food and/or supplies will result in an additional charge at a rate of \$24 per 30 minutes... in addition; the cost of the items purchased will be billed to you upon your return.)*
- If your pet is on medication, please leave us written instructions regarding the current medication dosage and routine each time you travel. Make sure your pet's medications are kept in a safe, enclosed cabinet or container away from the pet's reach. Also, on the first day of your trip, let us know when the pet has received his/her last dose of medication. **If a medication is new for your pet, please contact us at least a week in advance of your trip** so we can discuss the details before you leave.  
*Note: We do our best to provide medications to your pet as directed. If your pet may not be amenable to taking medication, resists, hides, is aggressive in any way, or is unwilling or uncomfortable with strangers, or unable to take their medications, please let us know before you leave so we can discuss the situation. We can not always be successful giving medications in the home setting. We also will not be able to constantly observe for adverse side effects, symptoms, or changes in condition. If your pet's medications are necessary for a pet's well-being and/or you are unsure whether your pet will accept or tolerate the medications, it is always better to reserve a space for your pet for medical boarding in a veterinary setting.*
- We make every effort to accommodate your visit time requests. Sometimes due to heavy caseload or circumstances beyond our control such as pet illness or messes, traffic, weather conditions or other unexpected events, our visit time may be adjusted accordingly. Pets on time-sensitive medications or having other special needs are given priority on our schedule.
- We walk only dogs of the same family together, usually not more than 2 at a time. Dogs that may be anxious, reactive, distracted, pull constantly, or who may be unpredictable will be walked separately or an alternative care plan will be made with your agreement. We prefer to use regular leashes rather than Flexi-leads. Poop bags must be provided by the client for dog walks.
- If additional service time is needed beyond the planned visit such as for intensive cleanup or other unusual circumstances you will be billed for the extra time at the rate of \$12 per each additional 15 minutes of needed service. This also applies to situations where we might need to walk-in to your visits due to extreme weather conditions.

- Please notify your vet that *The Sitters* is caring for your pets, and have the vet office staff enter in the pet's record that we have permission to discuss care or bring your pet in for treatment if ever needed. Have vet records in an easy-to-find location in case of an emergency. Proof of vaccination, current pet licenses, pet ID with your home and cell phone number, and pet carriers for each animal are required...especially in case of disaster or if emergency placement is ever needed. All pets in our care must be currently on a flea protection program unless contraindicated by their veterinarian.
- It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that crates, x-pens, kennels, fences, latches, gates, doors and windows are escape proof both indoors and outdoors. It is also a good idea for pets with access to the outside to wear ID tags with your cell phone number, even if they are microchipped. If pets are free-roaming, unsecured, have pet doors or electric fences, we will not be liable for their well-being when unattended. If your pet can escape from his/her enclosure we are not responsible for any damage it does to himself, other pets or indoor or outdoor property.
- **Remember to call or text your Sitter** to let us know that you are home from a trip. Text messages may be left at any hour. If we don't hear from you at the time your pet's next visit is due, we attempt to contact you. If we can't reach you, we will provide visits at our usual charge until you confirm that you are home.

## Refusal of Care

- We do not visit pets less often than once per day. There are no exceptions to this policy.
- We do not provide care to aggressive animals or those with a bite history. This includes pets that have behaviors such as growling, showing or threatening to use their teeth or claws, charging at, avoiding or chasing people coming in, staying in or trying to leave the home or property.
- We will refuse care if we believe the pet is ill, contagious, stressed or malnourished and should be more closely monitored, or if the pet is at risk to self, staff, or property...or if the pet cannot be safely contained in the client home/property.
- If a pet is destructive to bedding, pillows, chairs, couches, carpet, floors, doorways, walls, plants or likes to eat inedible items, we may or may not be able to care for them. We consider these situations on a case-by-case basis.
- We do not take dogs to dog parks or to off-leash areas.
- We do not care for farm animals.
- We will refuse care if we feel the pet or the home environment is unsafe in any way.
- We will refuse care in home or pet hoarding situations.
- We will refuse care for any reason that causes concern to staff or the owner of *The Sitters*.

## Emergency Vet Care

If your pet is ill or injured while you are away, we will call you immediately. If you do not respond or can not be reached, we will attempt to contact your veterinarian. If the vet office is unavailable, closed, or if we are instructed to use a specific animal emergency care provider, we will transport your pet to the provider of choice.

If no emergency provider is specified in our agreement, we will use a 24 hour animal emergency provider based on where you live, severity of the pet's illness and availability of service from the nearest preferred provider. We prefer:

Blue Pearl	Tacoma	253-474-0791
Summit Vet Referral Center	Tacoma	253-983-1114
Sumner Vet Hospital	Sumner	253-863-2258
VCA Pacific Avenue Animal Hosp	Tacoma	253-537-0241

Please let us know if you have financial or medical limitations for your pet's care or if you do not wish your pet to receive emergency services.

We are not responsible for any payment of veterinary or animal emergency veterinary fees. To ensure your pet will be served in a timely manner, leave a credit card authorization on file in our office for our services and/or emergency care as well as additional credit card authorization in your vet's office for pet care, medications, labs, diagnostics and/or supplies. We will invoice you for our Pet-To-Vet transport as well as any time spent waiting or participating in the vet or emergency visit.

## Keys

All clients are required to provide two or three working sets of house keys during our initial interview (*depending on if there are two or three sitters involved in your care*). There is always a Primary Sitter and a Backup Sitter assigned. Sometimes due to your location, longer trips, staff days off or other factors we may want another sitter to meet you and be trained to help out too. If only one set is received, you will be charged \$6.00 for additional key copies.

The Sitters will keep your keys with our secure key coding system unless directed otherwise. After the interview, if we are asked to pick up or drop off keys, there will be a \$20 charge per trip. If we are requested to mail back a key, a \$6.00 mailing charge will be incurred.

Due to power outages, battery failures, and sensitive garage key pads and door openers, The Sitters must have an actual key to a door and be allowed access to your home. Without key access, we can not be responsible for completing assigned pet sitting duties or responsibilities...and we may not be able to help you in case of emergency.

If you are not active as a pet sitting client within a 2 year period, and if you have not requested your keys back for any reason, your keys will automatically be destroyed.

## Emergency Phone Numbers and Contact Persons

If you will be out of town while we are pet sitting, please remember to let us know for each trip when you are leaving, a phone number where you can be reached (include a land line phone-- not only your cell phone), and the day and time you are expected to return. This information should be emailed or called in to our office as well as left in a note in your home.

Anyone designated to be your emergency contact person in our records must be reachable during the time you are out of town. They must also be willing and able to enter your home and be trained to care for your pets. This ensures that in the event of an emergency, in case something happens to you while you are away, or if our sitter for any reason can not continue providing care for your pets, there is someone identified who is able to assume responsibility for your pets. If services are missed in these unusual circumstances, credit for future pet sitting services will apply for any unused visits.

## **Sitter Backup**

In case your assigned Sitter is injured, ill or has an emergency, another Sitter will be assigned. It is our policy that your pets are not left without scheduled visits.

## **Sharing Pet Care Duties**

We do not share duties with anyone who is not employed and insured & bonded by our company. We will not be held responsible or liable in any way for injuries, damages, expenses, or any pet- or house-related problems that arise when others are involved in visiting your pets or working in/around your home during your absence. Our bonding and insurance will not apply if you have non-employees of The Sitters entering your home while you are away.

If you do choose to allow friends, family, neighbors, workers or other invited guests in your home while you are away, please notify our office of who they are, what vehicles they drive, how to reach them, and their times of approved visiting so we can be prepared. We have the right to refuse service if the situation seems unacceptable to us.

## **Payment**

Pet and house sitting are prepaid services. We accept payment in cash; by personal check and credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express and Discover cards).

For occasional vacation/business trip clients, payment must be made in full by your pet sitter's first visit of each trip. We will invoice you by email prior to your leaving for the trip. If you do not have an email address, the invoice will be mailed and payment is due before pet sitting commences.

Dog walking or frequent use clients may pay on a monthly schedule. We typically bill frequent use clients about the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Payment is due by the 28th of each month. If a visit has been prepaid but is subsequently cancelled, we will keep a credit for up to one year for future pet sitting visits as described in our cancellation policy.

You can make online credit card payments by individual invoice, or in some cases you may keep your credit card information on file in our secured system. If you prefer, you can mail your check in advance of your trip. Checks should be made out to "The Sitters" and sent to:

The Sitters  
1911 SW Campus Drive, #307  
Federal Way, WA 98023-6441.

Full payment is due prior to your service being provided. Failure to leave payment, pay by invoice due date, and/or any returned checks will result in a \$40 fee.

## **Gratuities**

When you wish to reward your sitter with a gratuity for a job well done, tips are gladly accepted at the time of service. If it's more convenient, the desired tip amount may also be added to your check or a tip invoice can be created and emailed to you for credit card payment to The Sitters. If you include a tip as part of your payment, your pet sitter will have the entire tip added to his/her paycheck. A guideline for tips is to leave a similar amount to what you would leave other personal care/service providers.

## **Credit for Unused or Cancelled Services**

All credits are offered in terms of future pet sitting services. No cash, checks or credit card refunds are made. Credits must be used within one year of the date of unused or cancelled service.

## Holidays

A 25% Holiday Surcharge per visit will apply on all services rendered on New Year's Eve\* & New Year's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve\* & Christmas Day.

*\*New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve...Holiday Surcharges apply for visits made 2 pm or later.*

## Cancellations for Holidays

Holidays are very busy times for pet sitters. When you book a trip, we reserve our staff time for your pets. If you make reservations for services during the holidays, payment is due when the reservation is made. If you decide more than 7 days before the holiday to cancel your reservation, you will receive a 50% credit for future pet sitting services. Any credit due must be used within one year from the cancellation date. If you cancel with less than 7 days of the holiday, no credit will be offered.

## Cancellations for Vacationing and Business Trip Clients

If you need to cancel your pet sitting reservation you may do so with 2 days notice and still receive a full credit for future pet sitting services. If you cancel with less than 2 days notice, you will receive a credit for future services less a \$24 trip cancellation fee.

If you return home early, you will be credited the full amount of unused visits for future services. Any credit due must be used within one year from the cancellation date. If you are late in returning, you will be billed for the additional visits.

## Cancellations for Dog Walking Clients

If you need to cancel your dog walking reservation you may do so with 2 hours notice and receive a full credit for future pet sitting services. Any credit due must be used within one year from the cancellation date. If you cancel with less than 2 hours notice, no credit for that visit will be made.

## Cancellations for Severe Weather or Disaster Conditions

If you need to cancel your pet sitting reservation due to severe weather or disaster conditions, you will receive 100% credit towards future services. Any credit due must be used within one year from the cancellation date.

All clients should be familiar with our Emergency/Disaster Plan provided under separate cover.

## Same Day Service

We are not always able to accommodate same day service requests...but some times we can. If you need pet sitting services on the same day as your call, we will add a \$24 same day service fee to your invoice.

## Questions?

If you have questions about these policies, please call 253-661-7488 or email us at [jw\\_edson@msn.com](mailto:jw_edson@msn.com). We look forward to caring for your pets!

**Jill W. Edson, Owner**  
**The Sitters**  
**1911 SW Campus Dr, #307**  
**Federal Way, WA 98023-6441**  
**Office Phone: 253-661-7488 (no texts please)**  
**Cell Phone: 206-979-6005 (text ok)**

**[www.the-sitters.com](http://www.the-sitters.com)** 🐾

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