



MOVING RESOURCES FOR PET OWNERS

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One of the most common reasons that people give up a pet is because they are moving, and they decide they cannot take the animal. They think moving with pets is too much of a hassle. If you're a renter, you may be discouraged about finding a pet-friendly rental. Or, you may think that your pet will find the move too traumatic, and therefore is best left behind. Or, you may feel that moving is complicated enough without having to deal with pets, too.

Remember, though, that your pet is depending on you now more than ever. Though moving can be an adjustment for pets, what they really want most is to be with you, wherever you are. There are challenges to moving with your pet, but with a little planning and creative thinking, the move can be accomplished without too much stress for either you or your pet.

You do not have to give up your pet just because you're moving. Moving is stressful even in the best of circumstances, so give yourself extra time to find a residence where pets are permitted. When talking to landlords, be honest and offer to introduce your pet(s) to the landlord. Many property owners will allow well-behaved pets, particularly if the owner behaves responsibly. Providing your pet's veterinary records, graduation certificate(s) from obedience classes, and references from past landlords can help to show a prospective landlord you are a responsible pet owner.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS

- Don't give up! Keep looking for an apartment that will allow pets.
- Ask friends or parents if they could lend a spare room (or the basement) for your pet to stay in temporarily while you look for a new home.
- Make your dog her own "resume" to give to prospective landlords when you submit rental applications. Include a description of her personality, her history and a charming photo. Many landlords are impressed by a list of previously taken obedience classes or certifications, such as therapy-dog certification or the Canine Good Citizen (CGC) designation, so be sure to include those. You can also offer letters of recommendation from past landlords, trainers or your dog's veterinarian.
- Ask your landlord for permission to keep the pet temporarily until a new home can be found. (Putting up a deposit can help.)



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- Board their pet until a new home can be found.
- Ask a friend or relative to take care of their pet until a new home can be found.
- Put up posters (with a photo of their pet) at work, places where they shop, their church, the local elderly housing development (if pets are allowed), health clubs, the public library, pet supply stores, and vet clinics.

HOW TO FIND A PET FRIENDLY RENTAL

The key here is planning ahead; allow plenty of time for your search. If you are moving to an area where there's a lot of competition for rental housing, start by gathering proof that you are a responsible person. A letter of recommendation from any or all of the following people can help a lot: your current landlord, your veterinarian, your trainer, your groomer, a neighbor or two, a pet sitter or dog walker. All of these people can contribute to the image of your dog or cat as a valued, well-behaved family member.

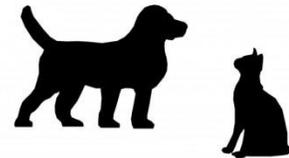
Next, start checking the local newspaper and ask local realtors about pet-friendly housing. See the last 2 pages of this document for local resources in the Charleston area.

WHY YOUR PET SHOULD MOVE WITH YOU

If you think it would be more humane to drop your pet off at your local shelter, you may not be aware of the reality of pet overpopulation in this country. Millions of animals are killed in shelters each year. Many of them are cute, lovable, young, healthy and/or special in some way, just like your pet. Even if your pet does get adopted into a new home, being in a shelter for a period of time and then adjusting to a new home can potentially involve a great deal more stress for the animal than simply moving.

HOW TO EASE THE MOVE WITH YOUR PETS

Moving to a new home may be one of the most stressful life events you'll ever have to tackle. But in the chaos of cardboard boxes, packing tape and moving trucks, you might not realize how stressed your pets feel, too. Here are some simple ideas you can use to make the transition easier.



Before you pick out your dream home, make sure your pet will love it just as much as you do. It's a good idea to walk around the neighborhood to determine whether the area seems safe for your pets. Be on the lookout for neighborhood dogs that seem aggressive or are left unattended.

Packing Up Your Home



Cats aren't big fans of change. You can help your cats (and skittish dogs) adjust to the moving process by bringing in moving boxes early, and by keeping your furry friends in a familiar room you plan to pack up last. On moving day, keep your pets in a quiet room with the door shut, or at a friend's house. This will ensure that your cat or dog won't get scared and try to make a quick getaway while the movers load up the truck.

Long Distance Moving? If You're Planning a Road Trip...

If you're moving to another state or another part of the country, the trip itself can seem daunting. It doesn't have to be traumatic; once again, it pays to plan ahead. If your pet is not accustomed to riding in the car, get him used to it gradually. Start by sitting in the car (without going anywhere) with him for short periods of time. To make it a more positive experience, you can give him a treat or play with him. Progress to taking your pet for short jaunts in the car. By the time you're ready to go on a long trip, traveling in the car should be less stressful for your pet. If your pet continues to be anxious, try giving him one of the herbal formulas designed to soothe and calm. Again, try this ahead of time, in case your pet has an adverse reaction. Sometimes, playing the radio or an audio book can help relax your pet.

Many pets haven't spent much time in crates or cars. In the weeks or months leading up to the big trip, you can prepare your pets by gradually acclimating them to their crates. First, place their food inside an open crate, and eventually have them eat their meals in the crate with the door shut. Try carrying your pets around the house in the crate or taking a short drive. You can help your pets develop a positive association with the crate by providing treats and playtime at the conclusion of crate time. Taking these steps will make moving day a lot more comfortable for you and your furry friends.

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If you'll need to stop overnight, you should plan ahead by locating pet-friendly accommodations along your route. Many motel and hotel chains take pets. Here are some helpful websites that list pet-friendly places to stay and also contain helpful hints for traveling with pets:

- www.petsonthego.com
- www.petswelcome.com

If you have a dog, give her a good long walk before you start out and make frequent stops so she can stretch her legs. Keep her on a leash at all times when she's outside the car or hotel room. Even if she normally responds to voice commands, she may spook easily in new environments. Cats should be kept in a carrier or crate while you're driving. At rest stops, you can let your kitty out (in the car, of course) to use the litter box. Or, use a crate large enough to hold a small cat-litter tray, as well as bedding and small food and water dishes.

Make sure you take along a supply of your pet's regular food and some treats – now is not the time to change your pet's diet. Also, you might want to bring along your pet's favorite toy or bed to provide comfort and familiarity for your pet during your stay in foreign accommodations.

Settling in

When you arrive at your new home at the end of your long journey, it will be tempting to set your dog or cat loose in the house to explore. However, a new and unfamiliar space can be overwhelming to your pets. Start by allowing them to adjust to one room—their “home base”—which should include their favorite toys, treats, water and food bowls, and litter box for cats. When they seem comfortable, gradually introduce them to other rooms in the house, while keeping some doors shut. You can slowly move your cat's litter box to a different room, too.



Be extra careful to keep your pets safe and secure. If your dog will be spending time in a fenced yard, make sure that the fencing is sturdy and has no escape routes. For a few days, you might not want to leave her alone outside while you're away. Even if you have an indoor/outdoor cat, don't allow your cat outdoors for at least a month. Cats are very place-oriented and have been known to attempt to return to their former home. Establish a feeding and play/exercise routine for your pets as soon as possible, to reassure them that life goes on as usual. Try to spend extra time with your pets so they'll feel comfortable and safe in their newsurroundings.

INSURANCE

Pet-liability insurance for renters

Renters may obtain renters' insurance for their personal property. This insurance may or may not cover animal-related claims, so check with your insurance agent for more information about your policy.

Another consideration is your landlord and the insurance he or she maintains on the property. Landlords maybe reluctant to rent to people based on the size or breed of a particular pet. If you run into this, ask if you can provide a letter from a veterinarian or a written assessment from a particular trainer that states your animal has a friendly temperament. Talk to your landlord to find out what his or her specific concerns are; sometimes they are more worried about property destruction or damage than bites. If you are already locked into a rental contract, talk with your landlord about what you can do to resolve any conflict.

Pet-liability insurance that covers you and your family from liability for dog bites or other animal-related issues is very state-specific. Not all insurance companies operate in all states, and states have different laws regulating the types of insurance that can be sold.

Pet-liability insurance for homeowners

If you own your home, check with your homeowners' insurance agent to find out what type of coverage you already have. Ask what your coverage is for dog/animal liability. It is possible that such coverage may be excluded by your insurer, which means you would not be covered if one of your animals hurts someone or causes property damage. If you would like to make a change to your insurance coverage, discuss it with your existing agent. If the company that he or she represents doesn't offer what you're looking for, call other insurance agents in your area to ask about their homeowners' products.

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In some cases, insurance companies exclude specific breeds. If you have a dog whose breed is excluded by a particular company, you can choose to not give that company your business, or you can ask to challenge the company's classification of your dog. For example, if your dog has been designated a pit bull by your insurer, ask if you can obtain a letter from your veterinarian or the results of a DNA test to counter that designation. If you do have a pit bull terrier and you're having trouble getting homeowner's insurance because of breed discrimination, see the resources in the last two pages of this document.

Another option for homeowners is "umbrella" coverage insurance. These policies provide a specific dollar amount of coverage over and above your standard homeowners' insurance. They are meant to protect you from a catastrophic liability claim. An umbrella policy may cover events that your standard homeowners' coverage does not. For example, if your dog is not insurable with your present company under your homeowners' policy, an umbrella policy may cover events related to your dog. However, it is very important to consult your insurance professional about specific coverages you have or can obtain in your state.

Being Faced With Eviction

If you are being faced with eviction or loss of your pet, seek help before you do anything drastic. There are legal resources in Greenville to help you find answers to questions about your lease or about notices you have received from your landlord. These include nonprofit agencies, whose services may be low cost or even free. You may be able to keep your housing and your pet, so do not panic.

What if I have a disability and depend on a service or companion animal?

This is a special situation. Because of federal fair housing laws that require landlords to allow reasonable accommodations for tenants with disabilities, the landlord may not prohibit a service animal or companion animal from living in the unit, or charge the tenant extra rent or security deposit. A service or companion animal should not be considered a pet. A service or companion animal should be treated, from the landlord's perspective, like a piece of medical equipment.

While the Americans with Disabilities Act gives specific guidelines for what are and are not "service animals," the Act says that "emotional support animals that do not qualify as service animals under the Department's title III regulations may nevertheless qualify as permitted reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities under the FHAct and the ACAA." The Fair Housing Act, which addresses "reasonable accommodations" in rental housing, is available here.

The tenant may be required to provide a note from a physician that verifies the service or companion animal is needed as an accommodation to the person with the disability. Even though the animal does not need to be a certified service or companion animal and apartment applicants are not required to state anything about the animal on an application, tenants may be required to provide a letter upon request after they move in. This letter should be from a medical professional, and should include 2 important points:

1. Tenant has a disability (the medical professional doesn't need to state the kind of disability)
2. That the animal is necessary to treat the disability that Tenant possesses (no certification or specification of what the animal does to treat the disability is necessary)

If the landlord refuses to allow the service or companion animal, you may contact:

U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD has publications available about fair housing and can direct you to your local fair housing office.

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