

# HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT CARE FOR YOUR DOG

TOP TIPS TO HELP AVOID A BAD DOG CARE  
EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR FUR BABY

ERIN SCHNUTE



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*Dogs are not  
our whole life  
but they make  
our lives whole*

ROGER CARAS



## INTRODUCTION

Imagine with me that you are heading out of town, you've booked your dog Max at the local kennel- feeling confident that this doggy hotel is going to be just what your boy needs. Only to come home to a stressed out injured dog! And no one can tell you exactly how Max got a wound on his paw. Now that he is home he is shut down and distant, he's regressed on the hard work you put into potty training and no longer eating on schedule- What happened to your sweet boy?

**Not all dog care is created equal, and not all dogs need the same type of care. This guide is meant to help you ask the right questions before you pick who is watching your furbaby while you travel. As the owner of Bed and BARKfest: a boutique dog boarding company in Michigan, I hear countless horror stories like Max's that could be easily avoided with these keys to picking your perfect dog care.**

## FIRST UP

You're ready to travel but what are your options for your fur baby? First up is deciding which route works best for you:

- Take them with you
- Kennels
- Pet Sitters
- Family and friends



When it comes to traveling, there are many options for what you can do with your pups. They will range in price, convenience and quality- even within each category. Arming your self with the right questions and knowing what to look for are key to finding the right fit for you and your pup!



*"Dogs do speak, but only to those who know how to listen"*

ORHAN PUMAK

# TIPS AND QUESTIONS FOR ALL CARE TYPES

- Ask for reviews or insight from your local community. Beyond just reviews, ask in FB groups, ask on Next Door, or other community pages
- Is your kennel, sitter, or friend/family member aware of your training goals? Can they help maintain them? If you work with a trainer, who do they recommend?
- What is your dog used to? Does the care you're looking into match up with their daily life? With their breed needs?
- Prep your dog and make sure they're used to being away from you. If your dog is used to constant access to you- work on building up your time away from them BEFORE you book your trip
- Consider crate training. If your dog is not used to a crate and finds themselves needing one while you're away this is going to add to their stress levels
- If you are anxious about how your dog will do on your big trip, book a shorter stay to see how your dog handles a shorter trip.

# TAKE THEM WITH YOU

## Things to ask:

- Will you have access to pet friendly accommodations?  
Can your dog be in your accommodations without you?
- Do you have travel safe crates? Crash tested for the car, or plane safe?
- How will you get there?
  - If flying is your dog small enough to ride in the passenger department? If they're large dogs are you comfortable with them flying in cargo?
- Will your dog enjoy the location? Are they comfortable in new places? Will the location be loud or overstimulating?
- Can you crate your dog for long periods when you're not with them?

## PROS

- 1 Fun adventure with your best friend- great memories
- 2 No time apart from your fur baby
- 3 Can be cost effective if you have the right supplies and stay

## CONS

- 1 You're tied down to your dogs schedule while you're away
- 2 Travel can be stressful for dogs- both car and plane
- 3 You have to have space for all food and supplies needed

# KENNELS

## Ask yourself:

Will your dog be able to handle the barking and high stimulation of a kennel? Many breeds, especially work or guard dogs, are more sensitive to the added noises.

## Ask them:

Do you have overnight caretakers?

How long are dogs left alone?

Can we book walks? (many kennels this is not an option, if it is an option it will be an add on service)

See next page for full list of best questions to ask a kennel before booking

## PROS

- 1 Typically a very cost effective options for your dog
- 2 Highly social dogs may love the big groups and play
- 3 Usually have camera's so you can watch your dog 24/7

## CONS

- 1 Constant stimulation and noise is stressful for dogs- very loud
- 2 Little to no intentional human time for dogs- large groups
- 3 High risk of catching sicknesses or getting injured

# KENNEL QUESTIONS CONTINUED

## 1. Staff Qualifications:

- Are the staff members trained in pet care, CPR, and first aid?
- How much experience do the caregivers have in handling different breeds and temperaments?

## 2. Health and Safety:

- What vaccinations are required for dogs staying at the facility?
- How is the facility cleaned and disinfected to prevent the spread of diseases?
- Is there a protocol for handling medical emergencies, and is there a nearby veterinary clinic?

## 3. Accommodations:

- Can you tour the facility to see the living conditions and play areas?
- How often are the dogs exercised, and what type of activities are provided?

## 4. Diet and Medication:

- How is feeding done? What is done if the dog isn't eating?
- How are medications administered, and is there an additional cost for medication management?

## 5. Security Measures:

- How is the facility secured to prevent escapes or unauthorized access?
- What measures are in place to ensure the safety of the dogs during playtime?

## 6. Communication:

- How often will you receive updates on your dog's well-being during their stay?
- Is there a system in place for immediate notification in case of an emergency or concerning behavior? Ask them to define concerning behavior.

## 7. Socialization and Grouping:

- How are dogs grouped together, and is there separation based on size, age, or temperament?
- What is the staff-to-dog ratio, ensuring adequate supervision and attention?

## 8. Special Needs and Preferences:

- How does the facility cater to special needs, such as administering medication or accommodating specific routines?
- Can you bring personal items for your dog, like their favorite toys or bedding?

## 9. Client References:

- Can the facility provide references from other pet parents who have used their services?
- Are there online reviews or testimonials available for you to read?

# PET SITTERS

## Questions:

- Are you bonded and insured?
- How long have you been working as a pet sitter?
- Do you have any formal training or certifications in pet care?
- Can you provide references from previous clients?
- What services are included in your pet-sitting package (e.g., feeding, walking, playtime)?
- How long will my dog be left alone?
- What is your protocol in case of a pet emergency or illness?
- Are you trained in pet CPR and first aid?
- Do you have a relationship with a nearby veterinary clinic?
- Can you provide a written agreement outlining the terms of service, responsibilities, and expectations?

## PROS

- 1 Personal touch for your dog, quality time with their sitter
- 2 Typically includes walks and a similar routine as at your home
- 3 Care is done in a residential home not a facility

## CONS

- 1 Not all sitters have credentials, formal training or experience
- 2 Higher costs, especially for Professional top level Sitters
- 3 Need to book ahead, not as easy to accommodate last minute



# FRIENDS OR FAMILY

Ask yourself:

- Are your dogs needs in line with what this person can handle?

Ask them:

- Are they comfortable managing your dog's behavior and any potential challenges?
- Do they know how to handle your dog in various situations, such as encountering other animals or dealing with anxiety?

## PROS

- 1 Cost effective
- 2 Your pup is familiar with them

## CONS

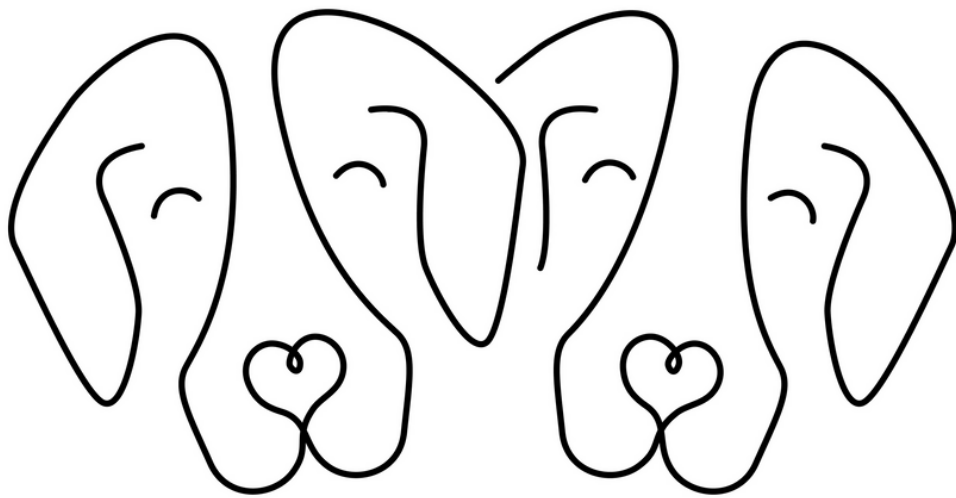
- 1 Likely no formal dog training or first aid background
- 2 Not always available for dates, can only help so often
- 3 Might not be reliable if conflicts come up in their schedule

## JOIN OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY

Follow **Bed and BARKfest** on social media and find out why we are making dog owners short list for their fur babies.

Professional Pet Sitters, lots of time with humans, customized care in your home or ours! Click on Detroit's Top Pet Sitters 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Instagram and TikTok: @BedandBARKfest



Bed AND BARKfest  
BOUTIQUE BOARDING

# We Let the Dogs Out