

What to Include in Dog Sit Instructions

PET INFORMATION

Record each dog's name, breed, size, appearance description, official registration number and chip information (if registered or listed with a registry or chipped), and general temperament description.

Veterinarian's Information/List of Authorized Medical Decision Makers

Include your veterinarian's name, address, and phone number. Also, be sure to note the name, address, and contact information for those who are allowed to make medical decisions for your dog. This could be helpful for something as simple as your dog needing antibiotics or stitches (or even a more serious treatment).

Medication and Preventative Information

List your dog's medication, dose, and location of each medicine. These items could include glucosamine for joints, daily pain meds, or even fish oil supplements. List heartworm and flea & tick preventatives and where you record the dates last provided (perhaps you record this on a calendar on your fridge door).

Feeding

Record the location of where food is kept, the brand of the food, the amount to be fed at each meal, and the normal meal schedule. Label food bins, especially if you have multiple dogs on different types of food. Don't forget to list any treats or extras that are allowed, such as dental chews or snacks. If your dog has allergies or food sensitivities, highlight those issues and note that your dog should not eat anything that isn't on the list of approved foods.

Daily Routine

List the amount and type of exercise and other daily protocols. Is your dog used to a 5 minute belly rub each day? What is your dog's sleep routine? Even though your dog is adaptable, having this information may help a dog sitter or long-term care provider make your dog feel more at ease.

Special Needs

Does your dog have any special needs or exercise restrictions? Does your dog have hearing loss, vision impairment, or allergies? Do you know if your dog doesn't tolerate certain antibiotics well? Is your dog scared of the vacuum? Does your dog need to be covered up with a special blanket at night? Add that information too.

Home Alone Instructions

Do you have special instructions for when your dog is left home alone? Should the dog be baby-gated, crated, or kept in a certain room? Should your senior dog only be allowed one cup of water at night to prevent potty accidents? Should multi-dog households separate the dogs when the dogs are home alone? Add those items as needed.

Contact Information

If the list is specifically for short-term dog sitting, list your address during travel and your alternate contact information (things like the phone number of the person with whom you are staying) in case your cell phone is lost or damaged. Also, list your authorized and emergency short- and long-term care providers for the dogs; this should include the person's name, address, email, phone number, and relationship to you. Consider listing at least 2-3 emergency caregivers or even permanent caregivers.

Command Words

Create a list of command words that your dog knows and what behavior is expected for each command.

Review and update these instructions at least once annually. Finally, keep a copy somewhere handy, such as near the dog food or on the fridge. You want anyone helping with your dogs to be able to easily find these instructions.

HOME information

General

Door codes, keys and spare keys, wifi information (including name, password, physical location of router, and troubleshooting instructions), landline phone(s), thermostat use, location of emergency water main off/on and circuit breakers

Employees and service providers

Who else will be visiting the house and on what schedule? Include their contact information. Is the sitter expected to be there? Not be there?

Repair plan expectations

If something comes up, how do you plan to make repairs?

Outdoor maintenance and gardening

What is the work expected, where are tools and supplies located, and how much time should be spent each day?

Appliance & supply use instructions

Write down what appliances and supplies are off-limits and what can be used. Grill, air fryer, hot tub, pool, special entertainment systems, etc.?

Visitor policy

Who may visit the property under what circumstances?

Security systems

Describe security systems, cameras, and smart devices outside and inside the house. Will you provide codes? How should systems be managed in an emergency?

Natural disaster preparation

What are your expectations during a snowstorm? Extreme heat? Flooding? Power outage? Describe the emergency equipment or supplies available in the home (flashlight, air filters/masks, extra water, solar chargers, etc.)