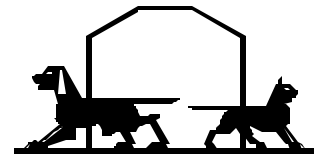




Maricopa County Animal Care & Control



HOW TO CHOOSE PET FRIENDLY HOUSING

13 STEPS TO FINDING PET-FRIENDLY RENTAL HOUSING

Give yourself enough time. Nobody likes the hassles involved with moving. As a pet owner you have the added responsibility of moving your pet, as well. If you are renting now, start to check ads and contact Realtors and rental agencies weeks before your lease expires. If you are contemplating buying a condominium, expect your search to take at least four to six months.

Understand why many housing communities reject pets. Put yourself in the shoes of a landlord, housing manager, or condominium association board for a moment: you may have had bad experiences with irresponsible pet owners who didn't safely confine their animals or pick up their feces, sneaked pets in, or left ruined carpets and drapes when they moved out. You may be worried about complaints from neighbors and wonder how you are going

to deal effectively with pet owners if problems arise. All of these concerns are legitimate.

That's why a person looking for an apartment, house, or condominium must be able to sell him or herself as a responsible pet owner, someone who is committed to providing responsible pet care.

Make use of available resources. Contact the humane society or animal care and control agency serving the area into which you are moving; they may be able to provide you with a list of apartments or condominiums that allow pets. If you know any Realtors, rental agents, or resident managers who own pets themselves or who share your love of animals, ask them for leads. And while there is no substitute for making a professional connection with someone who understands how important it is to you to keep your pet, look for a community apartment guidebook at the supermarket or near newspaper distribution boxes on the street. It may indicate which apartment communities allow pets, what size, and how many. In addition, be sure to check your local newspaper and on-line list of links to sites that list pet-friendly

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs contact (602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.gov
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apartments.

Recognize that it may be futile to try to sell yourself and your pet to a large rental community with a no-pets policy. You're more likely to be successful if you focus on those that say they allow most pets, allow certain pets (for example, cats or dogs weighing less than twenty pounds), or that don't say, "Sorry, no pets." Individual home and condominium owners may be easiest to persuade. Ideally, look for a community with appropriate pet-keeping guidelines that specify resident obligations. That's the kind of place that's ideal for pet owners because you'll know that other pet owners there are also committed to being responsible residents.

Gather proof that you're responsible. The more documentation you can provide attesting to your conscientiousness as a pet owner, the more convincing your appeal will be to your future landlord. Compile the following documents: A letter of reference from your current landlord or condominium association verifying that you are a responsible pet owner. Written proof that you've enrolled your dog in a training class. A letter from your veterinarian stating that you have been diligent in your pet's medical care. Supply a pet health report and documentation that your pet has been spayed or neutered. (A sterilized pet will be healthier, calmer, and far less likely to be a nuisance to neighbors.)

Make your request to the individual or group who has the ultimate authority to grant you permission. Usually this will be the owner

of the house or apartment. The owner may, however, delegate the decision to a property manager or resident manager. Check to see if, in addition to obtaining the landlord's approval, you must also submit a written request to the building's board of directors (or association, in the case of a condominium community).

If you encounter a no-pets policy, ask if it is the result of a negative experience with a previous resident. Addressing your landlord's prior experience may show you how to present your own request most effectively.

Let the landlord, manager, or condominium board know that you share any concerns about cleanliness. Point out that your pet is house trained or litter box trained. Emphasize that you always clean up after your dog outdoors and that you always dispose of your pet's waste properly.

Promote yourself. Responsible pet owners make excellent residents. Because they must search harder for a place to live, pet owners are more likely to stay put. Lower vacancy rates mean lower costs and fewer headaches for landlords and real estate agents. Let prospective landlords and managers know that you understand that living with a companion animal is a privilege, not a right.

Promote your pet. Offer to bring your pet to meet the owner or property manager,

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or invite the landlord to visit you and your pet in your current home. A freshly groomed, well-behaved pet will speak volumes. Emphasize that the same pride you take in caring for your pet extends to taking care of your home. Many landlords are concerned about fleas, so be sure to let your prospective landlord know that you maintain an active flea control program for your pet and home. Provide written proof that your pet is spayed and neutered and is, therefore, healthier, calmer, and less likely to create a nuisance.

Make it clear to the landlord, manager, or condominium board that you keep your cat inside and your dog under control at all times and that you understand the health and safety benefits of doing so.

If you can't arrange for a meeting, why not make a scrapbook with photos of your pampered pet in his current home or present a prospective landlord with your pet's resume? That should make a positive impression!

Be willing to pay a little extra. Tell your prospective landlord or resident manager that you are willing to pay an extra security deposit to cover any costs that might be incurred by your keeping a pet.

Get it in writing. Once you have been given permission by a landlord, manager, or condominium committee to have a pet, be sure to get it in writing. Sign a pet addendum to your rental agreement. Comprehensive agreements protect people, property, and the

pets themselves. If your lease has a no-pets clause, verbal approval won't be enough. The no-pets clause should be crossed out of the lease before you sign it-be sure it has been crossed out on your landlord's copy, too. You may be required to pay a pet deposit, some or all of which may be non-refundable. Be sure to discuss deposits and monthly pet fees in advance. And have them put into writing, too. Request a copy of any house rules pertaining to pets. Let the landlord know that you will abide by the rules set for the broader community and respect the concerns of residents who do not own pets.

Be honest. Don't try to sneak your pet in. Keeping an animal in violation of a no-pets rule contributes to the general inclination of landlords not to allow pets. It also can subject you to possible eviction and other legal action.

HELPING YOUR PET SETTLE INTO YOUR NEW HOME

Moving to a new home may be stressful to your pet, so be patient, understanding, and provide lots of extra affection. Here are some pointers to help you settle in safely and sanely:

CATS

For the first few days, it's smart to confine your cat to one room of your new home while you work on putting the rest of the place in order. Prepare the room with your cat's bed, litter box, food and water bowls, and toys. Now is the perfect time to

make your cat an indoor pet. Cats who live indoors live longer and healthier lives. Resist attempts by your cat to go outdoors. If your cat hasn't established an outdoor territory, he or she is less likely to be interested in going outdoors. If you play with your cat and supply lots of attention, your cat should have all he or she needs indoors.

DOGS

Ideally, your dog's first introduction to his new home will be with familiar furniture already in place, including his or her bed and crate, toys, and food and water bowls. If you must be away from home for many hours each day, look into having a pet sitter visit with and walk your dog or consider dog day care. If your dog has access to a yard, make sure the fence is too high to jump, that the gate latches securely, and that your dog cannot dig under the fences.

SAFETY FOR ALL PETS

Make your new home safe for your pet by providing a secure place for things that can poison, such as cleansers, insect sprays and pesticides, medications, chocolate, certain plants, and antifreeze things that can burn, such as plugged-in appliances, boiling liquids, open flames things that can electrocute, such as chewed-through lamp cords things that can strangle, choke, or obstruct breathing, such as choke collars, small balls, sewing thread and needles, pantyhose, and bones things that can topple or crush, such as precariously placed appliances, top-heavy filing cabinets, and

lamps things that can allow escape or theft, such as loose screens and inadequate fences. **NEVER LEAVE YOUR PET UNATTENDED ON A BALCONY OR CHAINED IN A YARD.**

VETERINARY CARE

As soon as possible, find a veterinarian and take a practice drive to the veterinary emergency facility. Trying to find it when you really need it can cost precious moments.

DISASTERS

Wherever you live, disasters such as fire, flooding, or earthquakes may occur. Make sure that you are prepared to ensure your pet's safety in case of a disaster. Start by keeping a list on hand of community animal welfare resources. The HSUS has written disaster guidelines to help you.

For more information on all aspects of responsible pet care, such as choosing a veterinarian, dog trainer, pet sitter, and boarding kennel, making your cat an indoor pet, solving behavior problems, finding pet-friendly hotel accommodations, and more visit our Pet Information Center. For information on finding pet-related resources in your own community, see *Using the Telephone to Find Resources for Pets in Your New Community*.