



EVALUATION GUIDE

Dog Boarding Evaluation Guide

A toolkit to help you evaluate boarding facilities and make more informed decisions about your **silly goose**'s overnight care.





WHICH SETTING IS RIGHT FOR YOUR DOG?

Home Pet Sitter	Boarding Facility	Daycare Facility
Your pet is not up-to-date on vaccines or is not spayed/neutered	Your dog is up-to-date on vaccines and is spayed/neutered	
Your pet has separation anxiety or has trouble adapting to new spaces	Your pet is well-socialized and does not exhibit extreme resource guarding (food, toys, people)	
Your pet is reactive or afraid of other animals or people	Your pet does not have separation anxiety and is not reactive towards people, barriers or animals.	
Your pet needs to be under constant supervision due to a health complication	Your pet adapts quickly to new environments/people and does not have significant supervision requirements or health concerns	
You'll be away for a few hours, for a day trip or longer trip.	You'll be away for at least a few days.	You'll be away for a few hours (less than one day)



COMMUNICATION & TRANSPARENCY

Can you take a tour?

If they refuse to show you around, consider it a red flag. Ensure the kennels are clean and roomy. Trust your instincts.

Is there webcam access to your dog's kennel?

How present is the staff during play time?

Can you meet the staff who will be looking after your dog?

Do they have insurance to cover eventualities?

Will they share if a dog has died or been seriously injured in their care?

How did they handle the situation and communication with the owners?

What are their documented communication protocols if a dog is injured or dies?



DOG SAFETY

Are staff physically present 24/7?



Texas Law Note: HB 2063 mandates kennels provide written notice if pets will be unattended during certain hours or if the facility lacks a working sprinkler system.

Does the facility have secure fencing?

No spaces in fences. Doors dividing play areas and those leading to the street should be secured with double gates.

What vaccinations are required, and do all dogs have to show proof?

Does the facility have emergency procedures for injuries and natural disasters?

Does the facility have a vet office nearby for emergency and non-emergency care?

How soon is the owner notified of any injury or odd behaviors?



KENNELS

How are all the animals housed and how long will dogs be in kennels?

Is the facility loud or are there other potential sources of anxiety?

Will my dog have access to toilet and sleeping areas at all times?

Dog boarding facilities should provide dogs with the freedom to relieve themselves at any time, and also offer a private crate or space for them to rest or sleep as needed.

How many dogs are boarded there at one time?

A dog kennel should have a cap on the number of dogs it can accommodate. Check if each dog has its own unit or if multiple dogs share a kennel. If they do, inquire about the reasons, often, it's to keep multi-dog families together, but this should be a rare exception.



STAFF & DAILY EXPERIENCE

What is the ratio of boarding staff to dogs?

Does the boarding facility conduct background checks on their staff?

Are they trained in canine first aid or CPR?

What training or certifications does the daycare or staff have?

Example: Fear Free Boarding & Daycare Certification, IBPSA (International Boarding & Pet Services Association), or similar.

Will your pet share space with other dogs?

What kinds of activities are provided and for how long?

What will my dog eat?

Boarding can be stressful. Bringing your dog's usual food helps maintain a familiar routine and minimizes stress.

Is there a play area?

Don't just ask. Make sure you see the space and that your dog gets ample time to exercise and socialize during their stay.

Will you receive daily or weekly reports? Will they notify you promptly of changes in behavior?



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Can they accommodate dogs with special needs?

How do they deal with dogs who have boarding stress?

Will your dog have access to an area with no dogs or people if necessary?

If you are considering board and train options, it may be best to decouple the training and boarding facilities.

When it comes to training, group classes are great for teaching manners or sports. Private training is usually the best option for behavior issues. It can be rare to find great humane and effective board and train options.

Checkout our **Dog Training Evaluation Guide** for more tips, questions and guidance!



Remember: This guide is not a checklist. It's a tool. Not every question will apply to every situation. Focus on the factors most important to you and your silly goose.



A note on certifications: In an industry with little to no regulatory requirements, certifications mean something. They reflect a provider who chose to pursue formal training and professional standards when nobody required them to. But they're not a performance guarantee. Some certified providers will fall short; some uncertified providers will exceed your expectations. **Use certifications as one input in your evaluation, not a substitute for it.**

OUR PHILOSOPHY

*Asking questions is an act of love. This guide exists to help you ask the ones that matter most for the care of your **silly goose**.*

ABOUT ROLAND'S SILLY GOOSE CREW

Roland's Silly Goose Crew is an Austin, Texas 501c3 nonprofit founded after our dog Roland was killed at a local dog daycare in October 2022. He escaped through an unsecured door and was hit by a car. There were no consequences, no required reporting, and no required proactive disclosures to other families.

We started RSGC so no other family would face what we did without information, resources, or recourse. Through free evaluation guides, community partnerships, and legislative advocacy, we're working to bring transparency and accountability to the dog care industry.

Support Our Mission

Every guide we create and distribute is free. Your tax-deductible donation helps us reach more families, develop new resources, and advocate for stronger protections for dogs in Texas.

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