



EVALUATION GUIDE

# Pet Sitter Evaluation Guide

A toolkit to help you evaluate pet sitters and make more informed decisions about your **silly goose**'s in-home 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)



## PET SITTER EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

### Do they have any professional certifications relevant to pet sitting?

For example: Fear Free Pet Sitter Certification Program, Certified Professional Pet Sitter via Pet Sitters International, etc.

### Do they have pet first aid or CPR training?

### For sitters providing overnight care in their own home:

Do they have a secure fence? Are there other pets in the home? Will your dog be left unattended with other dogs?

### Do they have references you can contact?

### Are they able to accommodate your pet's specific needs?

Have a list ready: exercise routine, feeding schedule, medications, etc.

### Can they meet your pet in advance?

### Will they stay overnight or visit throughout the day?

### What experience do they have with your type of dog?

### If through a company, do they complete background checks on their pet sitter staff?



**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.



## BEST PRACTICES & SETTING EXPECTATIONS

### Leave a written list of your dog's daily routine, medications, vet information, and emergency contacts.

Are certain rooms or treats off limits? Do you expect 24/7 GPS collar usage? How long can your pet be left alone? Document everything. If you need a template, check out our ['Silly Goose Care Manual'](#) to start making your own.

### Are there cameras in your home you'll use to monitor visits? If so, have you communicated this to the provider?

### If your dog has a GPS collar, give clear charging instructions.

### Have a meet and greet with potential pet sitters while your dogs are present.



## YOUR DOG'S EXPERIENCE

### Will your pet be brought on walks or otherwise leave the property?

If so, how will they ensure your dog does not get lost or escape?

### How does the pet sitter reward dogs?

**Ask:** "If my dog does [unwanted behavior], what do you do?" Their answer should never include physical punishment, aversives, intimidation, or other dominance-based methods.

### At night, will the dogs be crated or will they have free roam to sleep anywhere?

### For overnight care in their own home: will dogs be able to free roam during the day?

### How often will they take your dogs out for bathroom breaks or enrichment?



## SAFETY, COMMUNICATION & TRANSPARENCY

### Will they provide regular updates?

### Pose an emergency scenario and see how they would respond.

Examples: If the AC goes out on a super-hot day? If your dog begins vomiting? If your dog escapes? Pay close attention to their approach, communication process and how they prioritize the safety of your pets.

### Does the pet sitter have animals of their own? Will they be present with your dogs?

### What is their approach to communicating when there is an emergency?

### 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?

### If the pet sitter needs to leave while watching your pets, how long will they be gone?



**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.



## GRADING IF YOUR PET SITTER DID A GOOD JOB

- ✓ Regular updates, pictures, notes on how each pet was doing each day
  - ✓ The sitter was at your property for the agreed upon times using doorbell camera / alarm notifications.
  - ✓ The sitter followed your instructions regarding pets leaving the property.
  - ✓ No other guests were allowed to enter the property or interact with your pets.
  - ✓ The pet sitter maintained a clean environment while you were away and the house is in order when you return
  - ✓ Your dog's temperament is happy and excited upon your return. There are no indications of fear, stress or illness.
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- ✗ Lack of regular reports or updates
  - ✗ Based on doorbell cameras or alarm notifications, the pet sitter's arrival / departure differs from what was agreed on. Check if the animals unexpectedly left the property at any point or if unexpected people were let into your home
  - ✗ Pee puddles, vomit, or other pet waste in the house when you return, indicating the pet sitter did not maintain the home or closely monitor the dogs.
  - ✗ Your dog appears stressed, fearful or anxious (outside the norm). There are signs of weight loss, lethargy, or other indicators of malnutrition, lack of enrichment or sickness.

## 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.

[rolandsillygoosecrew.org/donate](https://rolandsillygoosecrew.org/donate)



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## SOURCES

[humanesociety.org](https://humanesociety.org) • [pethub.com](https://pethub.com) • [whole-dog-journal.com](https://whole-dog-journal.com) • [animalhumanesociety.org](https://animalhumanesociety.org)

