

CHOOSING A KENNEL OR CATTERY

Boarding services can be found in many ways – Your veterinary surgery, the internet, pet magazines, pet shops and local councils all provide a list of kennels and catteries in your area. The choice is yours.

So, how do you decide?

A recommendation from a friend is always useful and a good place to start. While your vet may seem like the best person to ask for a recommendation, professional conduct regulations do not allow him or her to endorse any particular establishment. The best way to choose a kennel or cattery is to check it out for yourself. Use the simple checklist below to help you make your decision. If the kennel or cattery meets the following criteria then your pet is likely to be well looked after.

Checklist

Make an appointment to visit the premises. If you are not allowed to do this, look elsewhere. In a good establishment, staff should be welcoming.

- Do the animals currently being cared for have clean and full water bowls?
- Are the buildings well maintained so that there are no escape routes?
- Are the kennels smelly? (There should be little smell)
- Are the floors in each kennel smooth and clean?
- Do all the dogs and cats have free access to a run and suitable covered area?
- Ask if all dogs are locked in their own sleeping quarters at night in an area with suitable bedding.
- Ask if dogs are walked, where and for how long?
- Do the cats have toys to play with, a scratching post and a sun shelf?
- Can the dogs and cats have their own baskets/bedding to help them feel more at home?
- Will the dogs and cats be groomed? (A small charge may be made for special grooming care of longhaired breeds.)
- Is there a dedicated kitchen for the kennel that is clean and well stocked?
- Is there evidence of a diet chart in the kitchen for all the animals currently under their care?

What a good boarding establishment should ask for when you book

- Proof of up-to-date vaccination status to prevent spread of disease.
- Information about your pet such as name, age, eating habits or special diets, likes and dislikes. (The kennel or cattery should be prepared to feed the food you supply.)
- Any relevant medical history.
- Contact details for your vet and for a friend or relative who could make a decision on your behalf if necessary. (You may be asked to sign a veterinary treatment authorisation form, which allows the kennel or cattery to call in a vet if necessary. You can request that the staff contact your vet first if possible.)

**If you find a good kennel or cattery, remember to book well in advance.
Good boarding establishments fill up fast in peak season.**