

When you leave town this summer, have a good place for pets

Evaluating kennels and alternatives helps ensure your pet is in good hands

[CAROL MCALICE CURRIE](#)

Statesman Journal

June 15, 2007

With the end of the school year comes the start of the summer vacation season.

Packing kids and luggage into cars, planes, cruise ships and rickshaws, families are making tracks for parts near and far. The family pet often gets to tag along to some hotel or cottage rentals, but routinely Fido and Fluffy have to stay behind.

Some families choose to board their pets; others hire in-home pet sitters to walk and feed their dog as well as look after the house, said Pam Rouske, who owns Wags to Whiskers, a pet-sitting business in West Salem.

Rouske said in-home care offers advantages boarding does not.

- It allows the pet to safely remain in its own, familiar environment.
- The pet is able to maintain its own regular feeding and exercise schedule.
- There is no transport stress.
- Pets aren't exposed to other animals and the possibility of illness.

Jessa Hargrove, who owns and operates Dallas Doggie Daycare in Dallas, does not kennel dogs at her facility.

Dogs are allowed to roam on her tightly enclosed acreage and play in a fountain or sleep under trees. She has air-conditioned sleeping quarters for them and separates large dogs from small ones to ensure they mix well.

Hargrove said kennel-free boarding is growing in popularity because many owners can't stand leaving their pets behind in metal cages.

Hargrove stays with the animals throughout the day. She recommends searching for a boarding facility that has an employee experienced in evaluating temperament to ensure a dog isn't put in danger. Other do's and don'ts for finding a quality boarding facility, according to Hargrove, include:

- Ensuring that the facility requires all canine vaccinations, including bordatella (which typically is optional) to be current. "Make no exceptions," Hargrove said.
- Be suspicious of any facility that does not enthusiastically welcome drop-in inspections.
- Ask about the boarder's discipline philosophy. Give them an example such as "what would you do to quiet a constantly barking dog?," Hargrove said. Avoid those with extreme answers, operators who would do nothing or those who would physically punish the dog.

FETCH! Pet Care, a U.S. pet-sitting franchise operation, advises pet owners to ensure that operators are bonded and insured; conduct a criminal background check on in-home sitters; make sure a back-up sitter is available in case the primary sitter, and get at least two phone numbers for reaching the sitter.

ccurrie@StatesmanJournal.com or (503) 399-6746

Copyright 2007 Statesman Journal, Salem, Oregon

Boarding

The following is a sampling of kennel-free boarding and in-home care services:

Dallas Doggie Daycare: (503) 831-1811

Wags to Whiskers: (503) 588-2109

Catopia cat boarding: (503) 588-2287

Cats Only cat boarding: (503) 585-8151

The Pet Stop: (503) 932-6458