

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Jennifer Hewitt, Owner and Pet Care Specialist, Pawsitive Pet Care

Phone: 613-266-5062

E-mail: pawsitive@rogers.com

Web site: www.pawsitivepetcare.ca

For Immediate Release: 2012-11-12

Is your pet sitter insured and bonded? They should be.

Pet Sitters International and Business Insurers of the Carolinas partner to stress the importance of hiring professional pet sitters

Most pet owners know that the benefits of leaving pets at home are numerous. Pets are happier and experience less stress at home; diet and exercise routines are uninterrupted and a pet's exposure to illness is minimized.

Because of this the pet-sitting industry has experienced tremendous growth in recent years. Whether you are considering using a pet sitter for the first time or have been using the same pet sitter for a number of years, David Pearsall, director of sales and marketing for Business Insurers of the Carolinas, says that his company, who underwrites the bonding and insurance policies for members of Pet Sitters International (PSI), as well as a majority of pet-sitter businesses in the United States, recommends that proof of insurance coverage be verified before the house keys are turned over to a virtual stranger.

"Just like the local plumber that comes to fix your kitchen sink or the electrician that is wiring your new home alarm system, your pet sitter should maintain adequate liability and bonding coverage to protect you and your property against claims that arise out of their negligence," Pearsall said. "If an electrician wires a home incorrectly, that home could potentially burn down, and if a plumber neglects to turn off a valve, there could be excessive water damage to that home."

Pearsall stated that the general public typically adheres to the fact that service contractors of this sort should maintain general liability insurance to cover any claims that may arise and many people will usually request a certificate of insurance that shows proof of liability coverage.

"However, when utilizing someone to take care of their pet(s), many people simply call upon a neighbor, friend, or worst of all, a friend or neighbor's teenager or child," Pearsall said. "They never consider the liability exposures or risks involved."

Pearsall finds this so astonishing due to the fact that a pet sitter typically has more unsupervised access to the home, and for much longer periods of time than any other type of service contractor. In addition, a pet sitter has the additional responsibility of protecting the owner against possible injury to other people and property when the pets are taken off the premises.

Pearsall provides the following scenarios to illustrate the importance of hiring a professional pet sitter:

- Pet owner contracts a friend's teenage son to take care of their dog and pick up the mail while they are on vacation. When they come home the house and backyard littered with beer bottles and cigarettes. The carpeting inside is stained and the hardwood floor has burn marks where people have obviously put out cigarettes. Furniture and contents of the home are in total disarray.

- Pet owners contract pet sitter to take care of their 7-month-old black lab that is known to chew and is also scared of thunderstorms. The sitter is instructed to keep the dog crated, but only at night while in the home. Unfortunately the sitter neglects to put the dog back in the crate one night and a thunderstorm rolls through. When the sitter arrives the next morning, an expensive couch and Persian rug are completely destroyed. The dog has also used the bathroom in several places throughout the home.
- Upon returning from vacation, client notices that she is missing several items from her home including jewelry, a television, a DVD player and all prescription medications from her medicine cabinet. When she attempts to contact the pet sitter, she finds he has left the area.
- Pet owner instructs pet sitter to walk her dog daily in the local park, but to keep the dog leashed at all times as the dog is known to jump on people. While at the park, the sitter decides to play Frisbee with the dog. When returning with the Frisbee, the dog sees a couple that has stopped to talk to the sitter. The dog lunges up and knocks the lady down, causing her to tear ligaments in her knee.

All of these examples are actually insurance claims that Pearsall has received.

“These claims do not even take into consideration the damage that can occur to the pets if the sitter does not show up or does not give proper care while the owners are away,” Pearsall said. “To adequately protect your home, your pets, and yourself from potential damage and financial harm, only fully insured pet sitters that carry adequate coverage, which includes general liability insurance with coverage included for pets and property in their care, custody and control and bonding or employee dishonesty coverage to cover all potential theft claims should be hired.”

Pearsall chooses to offer these insurance policies to associations because their members show a commitment to the profession and an eagerness to learn from the shared experiences of other professional in the industry.

“In general, associations like PSI attract more professional pet sitters as opposed to fly-by-night pet sitters or inexperienced pet sitters,” Pearsall said. “Our numbers indicate that these business owners take extra steps to grow and protect their businesses.”

PSI, the world’s largest educational association for professional pet sitters, is dedicated to educating professional pet sitters and promoting, supporting and recognizing excellence in pet sitting.

With membership in PSI, Pawsitive Pet Care has reinforced its dedication to offering professional, quality services and increasing their knowledge of the pet care industry. Jennifer Hewitt and Pawsitive Pet Care are available for pet sitting in Ottawa East and Rockland. Call 613-266-5062 for an appointment. For additional information about Pet Sitters International, visit www.petsit.com.