Professional Pet Sitter

publication of NAPPS, the authority in professional pet sitting

Summer 2023

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Spotlighting Volunteer of the Quarter: George Lockwood

George Lockwood offers various pet care services for people living in and around Summerville, South Carolina.

Fetching Compliments from Clients

Learn How to Save a Choking Pet

Cautions about In-Home Pet Care

Harnessing Google Ads for Profit

Understanding Gut Health in Cats

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PET SITTERS

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One of George Lockwood's favorite pastimes is getting to play golf in his golf-minded community.

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COVER: Spotlight Volunteer of the Quarter, George Lockwood

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National Association of Professional Pet Sitters

PROFESSIONAL PET SITTER MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the *Professional Pet Sitter* is to provide tools for members to enhance their business, help them expand their knowledge of professional pet sitting, and communicate association news and events.

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Fetching Compliments from Clients

By definition, a compliment is an expression of esteem, respect or admiration. And, in the hard-working world of professional pet sitting, receiving a compliment from a client is a mood booster.

Credit longtime NAPPS member and board member Joni Sullivan, co-owner of Joan of Ark Pet Sitting, for sparking this conversation when she posted in the NAPPS private Facebook page "Share the best compliment you received from a client as a pet sitter."

Among the replies:

Maria Giaccio, of Lil' Rascals Pet Care: "Maria, you have been an amazing trainer for Charley. We are so grateful for the advice and guidance that you have given us over the past few months. We truly appreciate it. We are a better family because of you."

Dasha Ott, of Dasha's Pet Sitting Service: I had a client with a terminally sick cat that had me visit a few times to help them judge how the cat was doing since I wasn't seeing her day to day and would better notice changes. I was able to let them know that death was imminent and that helped them prepare for her passing. It was an honor to be trusted by them.

Martha Hand, of Martha's Dog and Cat Services: This is the compliment that touched my heart the most. The client, who had three cats, was a retired minister of music at her church. "I appreciate u so much & just know that the profession u have chosen is a ministry. God bless!"

Nancy Shaw, of My Dog Walker & Pet Sitting, LLC: Received this text from a client: "Makes me so happy to hear how much you enjoy him — thank you so much, Nancy! We really do appreciate all you do for him."

Kim Sheard, of Creature Comfort Custom Concierge Care, LLC: One pet parent refers to us as family. Providing service for about 15 years. Their second-generation dog is now 12.

Wag This Way Pet Sitting, LLC: I have clients that say to me I'm not a pet sitter, but a second mom. One client wrote,"You aren't their pet sitter. You are their second mother."

Liz Raitman, of Dog's Next Best Friend: "My dog was not clingy when I returned so I knew he had a fun-filled weekend with you!" Then when I went back to bring back their key, he pouted by the door when I left.

Patty Schild, of TLC Pet and Home Services: A $100 bill cash tip when the original bill was $75.

Miranda Young, of Magnolia Pet Sitting Services: I increased my prices for the first time in a long time. One of my regulars reached and this was her response: "I am good with that. I love you and will pay it. Thank you."

Dawn Stevens, of Dawn's Mobile Pet Sitting Services: "You are an extension of our family. I trust you more than my retirement planner."

Jana Shivers, of The Pet Nanny: "I wouldn't travel if I didn't have YOU to take care of my babies!" And "You know so much about animal health, you should've been a vet!"

Kristen Fowler, of Tate's Creek Pet Sitting: Note from an 8-year-old next to her hamster cage: "Thank you for taking care of my hamster. You are the best pet sitter ever!" Also, memorable Google review: "I'd give 10 stars, but only 5 are available."

Gwen Peake, of Golden Gate Pet Sitter: I recently did a meet-and-greet with a woman. She quoted my website back to me and commented on the photos she loved. I'd never had someone study my website so much! I then Googled her. She was a pop star in the 90s. (Obviously, I can't tell you who, but I completely remember her most famous song.) And, yes, she hired me to watch her cats next month.

Michelle Cox, of Less Stress Services, LLC: "Oh wow, she usually doesn't warm up to people like this!" from a client on our first meet-and-greet.

Kate Baker, of Gold Coast Cat Care: "You give me peace of mind so I can enjoy my vacation."

Renee Kennedy, of Renee's Ultimate Pet Services: Note on payment envelope: "Renee… the best Dog Babysitter EVER!"

Debbie Nelson, of Always Sitting Pretty, LLC: My clients (husband and wife) asked me if I would take their two dogs and cat if anything happened to them. I'm the only one they trust. I told them yes, I would be honored.

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Please send all letters to the editor: NAPPS@petsitters.org

Letters should include your name, address, and daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length or clarity. Submissions may be mailed or emailed as a word document.

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By Amy Sparrow, President

Learn to Pace Yourself

We are in the heart of the summer with lots of client visits to cover. It can quickly feel overwhelming, especially if this is your first summer as a professional pet sitter. Whether you are a solo pet entrepreneur or operate a large employee-based pet sitting business or something in between, it is important to hit the pause button and assess the situation before replying.

Yes, I am recommending that you pause before you pick up that phone to take on a last-minute pet visit request or enter a client's home. Then take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. It will help you to focus and not become harried.

For your mental well-being and to be 100-percent present for your booked clients and their pets, you need to pace yourself. And, to set boundaries. I am already giving my clients a head's up to schedule visits this fall before I am booked up.

Like you, I recognize that last-minute emergencies do happen, like a death in the family or a must-attend business trip. Or, one of your sitters on your team who can't make a visit because of a flat tire. Or, a client's dog is being fussy when it is time to receive needed eye medicine. It may result in requiring more time than originally scheduled for the visit to ensure the medicine is given. That's why it is important to build in time for such unexpected events. It is important to also alert a client if you are running a little late due to these circumstances.

Remind yourself — as I do for myself — that poor planning on another person's part does not constitute an emergency for you. If potential clients call at the last minute to try to schedule visits for their pets for a vacation, you need to explain that you do not have openings right now, but that you are happy to set them up as a client in the future.

You do not have to say yes to everyone. Invest the time to interview and select quality clients. They will become loyal, long-time clients.

Also, don't overlook the resources available to all NAPPS members. I often check out the webinars posted on the NAPPS website. Sometimes, I watch them a second or even a third time. If you are having trouble declining a last-minute request this summer, I highly recommend a webinar posted on May 22, 2019, called, "Pet Sit Like a Boss: Establishing and Maintaining Boundaries in Your Pet Care Business."

Summer is here. Breathe in. Breath out. You got this!

In appreciation,

Amy Sparrow
NAPPS President

By Arden Moore

Get Your Paws on these Pet Apps

In an increasingly digital landscape, new innovations are designed to make the lives of pets better. Here are the top seven pet apps that pet parents are yapping about in 2023 based on research conducted by DogTime.com:

Puppr: This app was developed by trainer Sara Carson, offering 70-plus dog training lessons at your fingertips. Dog training can be expensive and hard to fit into a busy schedule. So, the Puppr app allows you to control when you train and what you want to train for free. Puppr offers everything from basic obedience to advanced tricks.
https://www.puppr.app/

Dogs 'n' Parks: The perfect app for active dogs and cautious parents, Dogs 'n' Parks offers a whole new dog park experience. The app locates dog parks near you, allows you to read others' reviews and post your own feedback, and even connect with other local dog parents for pup playdates.
https://www.dogsnparks.com/en/

11pets: 11pets advertises itself as an app with 50-plus pet care features. The app is designed for not only dog parents, but animal rescue workers and dog groomers. The app allows you to track healthcare information for multiple animals and communicate with professionals about pet care. The app is free but offers a Premium version with more features.
https://www.11pets.com/en

iKibble: This is a quick and easy way to be sure the snack your dog just grabbed off the counter won't make them sick. (Unfortunately, this free app is only available for iOS users.) iKibble categorizes any food you could think of and provides an answer as to whether it's safe for your dog to eat. If your dog tends to get into anything you leave unattended, iKibble will save time and keep you from stressing over your dog's last unplanned meal.
www.ikibble.com

DOGO: The perfect cross between a traditional training program and a mobile app, the DOGO app allows you to train your dog in your own direction but receive feedback from a network of professional dog trainers. You can even upload clips of your dog's training progress in order to get input from trainers on how you can improve.
https://get.dogo.app

Whether pet snack safety, pet-friendly rentals, pet training and coaching, even locating the nearest dog park... there's an app for that!

PetCoach: Gone are the days of frantically Googling your pet's symptoms in an attempt to diagnose them while you wait for a vet appointment. PetCoach connects parents to veterinarians, nutritionists, and other pet professionals in order to answer any questions you have regarding their care. For nervous dog parents who sweat even the smallest sneeze, PetCoach can provide peace of mind.
https://www.petcoach.co

Sniffspot: One of the fastest-rising dog apps, Sniffspot hosts a network of private properties that you can rent in order to let your dog play somewhere new. This app is perfect for reactive dog parents looking for interesting but safe locations for their dog. You can even sort spots by stimuli present — for example, you can choose a spot where you won't be able to see any other dogs or people. You can also rent out your own (qualifying) backyard to other dog parents for some side income.
www.sniffspot.com ■

By Arden Moore

What to Do If a Dog Is Choking

Learn how to perform the doggy Heimlich and choose treats and toys carefully.

(This article originally appeared in Dogster *Magazine.)*

Any dog of any age or size can choke on almost anything. It can be a pet parent's worst nightmare. An object can get stuck in a dog's throat, block an airway, and render the dog unconscious.

And it can happen quickly and unexpectedly. Just ask Ryan Shaw, a certified professional dog trainer at What A Great Dog training center in Frisco, Texas. She was conducting an agility class when one of her students was holding her small terrier named Calli in one hand while encouraging Calli to nibble on the end of a hotdog held in her other hand.

"Suddenly, Calli ate the whole hot dog, started gagging and two seconds later, she was not breathing," recalls Ryan. "I learned how to do the Heimlich maneuver in a pet first aid class. I grabbed the dog, cradled her in my arm and performed abdominal thrusts. I then turned her upside down, hit her sharply on her back about four times and the hot dog popped out and landed on the floor. The dog recovered very quickly and resumed normal breathing, but it all happened so quickly."

Tragically, more than 200,000 choking incidents among dogs and cats occur each year in the United States with veterinary care to treat these pets topping $500,000 annually, according to veterinary experts.

"A dog in respiratory distress will be a scared dog," says Dr. Judy Morgan, who practiced veterinary medicine for 36 years and now runs Dr. Judy Morgan's Naturally Healthy Pets (www.drjudymorgan.com) to educate and empower pet parents to bring out the healthy best in their pets. "I saw many choking cases during my career and some of these cases did not have good outcomes, which is very sad as this is something that is preventable."

Sharing her need to prevent choking in pets is Johnna Devereaux, a clinical pet nutritionist and chief nutrition officer at Bow Wow Labs. This company creates the Bow Wow Buddy, (www.bowwowlabs.com) a line of Safe Fit Bully Sticks life-protecting safety devices. This device securely holds a chew in place to allow a dog to chew without choking on the last bit.

"No matter the size of the chew or treat, always supervise your dog when they are consuming something," says Johnna. "Dogs don't have the tactile ability to hold small pieces in their paws, so they take them whole into their mouths. This can be a recipe for disaster."

Dr. Morgan and Johnna teamed up to launch the first National Pet Choking Prevention Day on June 22. Sponsored by Bow Wow Labs, the mission is to educate pet parents and pet professionals on solutions that can help eliminate pet choking incidents on long-term chews and other objects. Learn more at https://nationalpetchokingpreventionday.com.

"Through education and national awareness, we hope to bring that staggering number of pet choking incidents down to zero because the best and worst part of choking is that it is preventable," says Johnna.

Dr. Morgan urges pet parents to know their dogs' eating and playing styles.

"It is important to understand how each individual dog handles treats, food and long-lasting chews," she says. "Some will try to gulp them while others will chew off small bits at a time. Supervision is critical."

Step–by–Step Guide to Performing Heimlich on Dogs

Dogs of any size will attempt to dislodge any object in their mouths by coughing and lurching forward. Step in to assist when this coughing turns into a gasping sound called a stridor. Your dog needs you to perform the Heimlich maneuver designed for pets in a calm manner.

As a master certified pet first aid/CPR instructor for 12 years and founder of Pet First Aid 4U (www.petfirstaid4u.com), I train pet parents and pet professionals in the veterinarian-approved way to perform abdominal thrusts safely and effectively on dogs and puppies.

For small dogs with airways partially or completely blocked by an object, follow these steps:

1. Stand and hold your dog with his back against your stomach.
2. Hold him up with one arm around his upper abdomen.
3. With your other hand, make a fist (tuck in your thumb).
4. Position your closed fist at the end of ribcage in the soft spot.
5. Thrust your fist in and upward five times in a row on the dog's exhale to try to dislodge the object.
6. Every five thrusts, open and inspect the mouth to see if you can dislodge any object.
7. Be ready to perform rescue breaths if the dog becomes unconscious. Use your speaker function on your cell phone to alert the nearest veterinary clinic of your arrival as you continue the abdominal thrusts.

By Arden Moore

Recognize that dogs love to chew, adds Johnna.

"The natural act of chewing supports so many different bodily systems," says Johnna. "Benefits include supporting oral health by massaging the gums, engaging the jaw muscles and providing friction against teeth to act like a natural brush to help boost oral care. The act of chewing releases serotonin, which supports a healthy and calm state of mind."

Dr. Morgan and Johnna recommend pet parents enroll in pet first aid classes offered in person and online that address ways to prevent and to provide on-the-scene first aid for dogs choking.

"Every pet parent should watch a video on performing the Heimlich maneuver or take a course in pet first aid," says Dr. Judy. "Having knowledge prior to an incident will save valuable time and potentially, save the life of a dog."

Johnna and Dr. Morgan also recommend these preventive tips to reduce the risk of your dog choking on an object:

- No toy should be able to fit inside a pet's mouth as it can easily cause choking and block the airway.
- Choose tennis balls that are wider than the wide of a dog's jaw, so it won't get stuck inside the mouth during a game of fetch.
- Routinely do a pet safety check in each room of your house to make sure that small objects, such as a plastic container of dental floss or a toddler's small doll is not within reach of a curious dog.
- Carefully scrutinize when selecting chews and treats. Safer examples include dehydrated meats, pizzle sticks and soft chews, says Dr. Morgan. ■

Choking Hazards

Here is a rundown of some everyday items that a dog can swallow and cause choking and even trigger unconsciousness:

Avocado pits	Food wrappers	Sewing supplies
Baby bottle nipples	Game pieces	Shoelaces
Baby carrots	Hair ties	Socks
Balls (tennis, rubber)	Hot dogs	Squeakers from plush toys
Bully sticks	Jewelry	Sponges
Buttons	Kibble pieces	Tampons
Cell phone	Rawhide chews	Tinsel
Corn cobs	Refrigerator magnets	Underwear
Dental floss	Rocks	Window blind cords
Diapers	Rubber bands	Yarn
Fishhooks	Sticks	

For medium to large dogs whose airways are partially or completely blocked by an object, follow these steps:

1. Stand behind your dog if he is standing.
2. With one hand, make a fish and tuck in your thumb.
3. Position this closed fist at the soft spot just past the ribcage.
4. Use your other open-palm hand to hold this fist in place.
5. Thrust your hands up and forward (toward the dog's mouth) five times in a row on the dog's exhale to try to dislodge the object.
6. Every five thrusts, open and inspect the mouth to see if you can dislodge any object.
7. Be ready to perform rescue breaths if your dog becomes unconscious.
8. Use your speaker function on your cell phone to alert the nearest veterinary clinic of your arrival as you continue the abdominal thrusts.

Dr. Judy Morgan offers additional option if the object is wedged in the back of the throat and cannot be safely removed:

"If the dog is lying down, stabilize the pet by placing one hand on the spine and thrust it upward under the ribcage with the (closed) fist of your second hand," she instructs. "Repeat the thrust four or five times, checking the mouth after each attempt to see if the object has dislodged."

Safety Tips for Fetching

Here are some tips to prevent the chance that your ball-happy dog will not accidentally get a tennis ball stuck in his throat:

1. Recognize that dogs are mouthy. They explore their worlds often by putting items in their mouth.
2. Not all tennis balls are dog safe. The ones people use on tennis courts materials that can cause intestinal and even bowel blockages inside dogs that may need to be removed surgically. The rubber and plastic materials in these tennis balls cannot be digested by dogs.
3. Tennis balls for people are coated in a fuzzy material that can cause choking by dogs trying to pull it off the ball. These balls can also wear down a dog's teeth and cause other dental damage.
4. Purchase dog-safe tennis balls that are made of pet-safe materials. Popular brands include Kong's Air Squeaker tennis balls, Hyper Pet Tennis Balls for Dogs, Banfeng giant dog tennis balls. All are available on Amazon.com and Chewy.com.
5. Toss only one ball for your dog to fetch and bring it back for you to throw again. This will prevent a dog from trying to pick up two or more tennis balls in his mouth and lead to choking or blockages. Do not leave several tennis balls in your fenced backyard to tempt your dog.
6. Regular inspect your dog's tennis ball and replace it when it shows signs of wear or peeling of the outer covering.

Writing Engaging Content for Pet Parents

As a pet care professional, it is your job to provide your clients with information and advice to help them make informed decisions about their pets. One of the best ways to do it is through the creation of engaging and informative content. In this article, we will outline the steps you need to take to create high-quality content for pet parents, and how to make sure that it is easy and enjoyable to read.

Many pet parents come to depend on pet sitters for pet care advice. Pet sitters are often regarded as the first-line of information. Unfortunately, there are websites on the Internet that contain erroneous or even misleading information about pets. Build trust with your clients by citing veterinarian-approved information in your blog posts or e-newsletters that you send to your clients.

Steps to Creating Engaging and Informative Pet Care Content

By following these steps, you can create engaging and informative content that pet parents can use in their day-to-day lives:

1 Choose a topic

Before you begin writing, it is important to determine the best topic for your content. Consider what questions pet parents may be asking and research potential topics related to those questions before settling on one that you feel most confident in addressing.

2 Research thoroughly

Once you have chosen a topic, take the time to research it thoroughly. Make sure to look at some of the latest developments in pet care and consider any potential challenges or trends that may be helpful when writing your content.

3 Stick to a structure

When writing engaging and informative content for pet parents, it is important to follow a logical structure that helps guide readers through the material without leaving them confused or overwhelmed. Consider using headings or subheadings to break up the information into smaller chunks and make the content easier to digest.

4 Keep it concise

Pet parents do not have time to read long and winding articles, so try your best to keep your content short and sweet. Aim for 600 – 800 words so that you can get all your points across without overwhelming readers. If cutting long stories short is not your strong suit, delegate this task to a professional writing services review website like Trust My Paper.

5 Use visuals

Visuals are a great way to break up text and make your content more engaging for readers. Consider adding images, infographics, or videos to help illustrate your points and draw in readers.

6 Focus on quality

Quality should always be the main focus when creating content for pet parents. Make sure to double-check all your facts before publishing and ensure that any information you provide is accurate and informative.

7 Keep it actionable.

Provide a few simple but effective can-do strategies to help pet parents.

Simple Ways to Attract More Dog Walking Clients

By Kate McQuillan of Pet Business Owners

If you're looking to attract more customers for your pet sitting or dog walking business, keeping it simple is key, especially when you're starting out. By choosing a couple of methods that resonate with you and implementing them consistently, you'll soon see positive results.

Local Shop Marketing: Reach Out with Flyers, Posters, and Cards

Take advantage of the tried-and-true marketing method of distributing flyers, posters, and cards in local shops. With tools like Canva, you can easily create professional-looking materials yourself. Ensure your contact information stands out and keep the design simple yet eye-catching. Start establishing your brand identity early by selecting colors and fonts that reflect your business.

You might also be interested in reading: "10 Offline Marketing Ideas for your Business"

https://petbusinessowners.com/offline-marketing-ideas/

Leverage the Power of Social Media

Tap into the incredible potential of social media to promote your dog walk business and build an online presence for free. Choose a platform you enjoy using and begin there. Consistency is key, so set aside dedicated time each week to plan, create, and schedule your posts.

Mix up your content with engaging posts like "Selfie Saturday," where pet parents can share selfies with their furry friends, as well as educational posts such as, "Tips for walking your dog when it's raining."

Network with Local Pet-Friendly Businesses

Expand your reach through networking both online and offline. Engage with other local pet-related businesses on social media and in real life. Share their offers, events, and blog posts, and they will likely reciprocate, giving you exposure to their audience.

Start a Blog to Share Valuable Information

Although setting up a blog requires effort, the long-term benefits make it worthwhile. Once your blog is up and running, the process becomes relatively simple. Answer questions that pet parents commonly ask about pets, pet sitting, and dog walking.

You might also be interested in reading: "The Pet Business Owners Guide to Blogging for Your Pet Business."

https://petbusinessowners.com/blogging-for-your-pet-business/

Harness the Power of Ratings and Testimonials

Encourage your satisfied customers to leave ratings and testimonials on platforms like Google and Facebook. Whenever they express their satisfaction with your service, kindly request they share their feedback as a review. Positive reviews on search engines and social media can greatly enhance your credibility and attract more customers.

Additionally, implement a referral program where happy customers can refer to friends. Promote your referral program to encourage more referrals.

You might also be interested in reading: "How to Use Customer Reviews in Your Marketing"

https://petbusinessowners.com/reviews-marketing/

Remember, you don't have to implement all these strategies at once. Select one or two that you find enjoyable and manageable, and most importantly, be consistent. Consistency is the key to building trust, gaining momentum, and ultimately growing your dog walk business.

Latest NAPPS Certified Members

Each issue, we salute the NAPPS members who successfully completed the NAPPS Certification Course. The self-paced course covers topics of importance to pet sitting, including pet care, health, nutrition, behavior of various species plus business development and management, pet safety and a complete pet first aid course.

Join us in congratulating the following who became NAPPS Certified Members between January and March 31, 2023:

- Shaela R. Pizzulo, Care Fur Pawz, Ltd.
- Gemma Osman, Pawsome Plays & Stays
- Polly Hopkins, Heart and Soul Pet Care Services
- Anneli Freeman, Running with K9s Pet Services, LLC
- Diana Zhu
- Kelly Winter, Palm Coast Pet Sitters
- Ana Koller, Wagwithana
- Jennifer Sybol, Comfort at Home Pet Services, LLC
- Lisa N. Watson, Your Personal Pet Sitter & Pet Taxi, LLC
- Gina Barker, Pet Pet Go, LLC
- Jacquelyn Nicole Hurteau, One of a Kind Dog Walking, LLC
- Andrew Abdelsayed, Fido's Fitness

By David Pearsall, CIC, CWCA

Know the Risks of In-Home Pet Care

Pet sitters have been providing in-home boarding and daycare for many years, but beginning with the Covid pandemic, this alternative to caring for clients' pets in their clients' homes has significantly increased in popularity. This rings true with our all of our association programs, including the NAPPS liability program.

Today, almost 35 percent of members insured under our association programs choose the optional in-home pet care coverage, as opposed to just 5 percent over a decade ago. Unfortunately, when the pandemic took our country by surprise, many people were forced to make changes and add services just to stay afloat, while others simply opted to work from home.

No matter the reason, many failed (and continue to fail) to consider the risks involved with pet boarding and daycare in their personal homes. Let's look at some of the claims we have seen arise out of in your home pet care (they too, have significantly increased as you can see from the recent claims list), and examine the various risks involved, so that NAPPS pet care professionals reading this column are all aware of the exposures that exist with this service.

Before we begin, however, it is important to note that some exposures that exist may not be insurance related, but still may pose a risk to your business. For example, many states and municipalities have laws in effect that are directly related to boarding pets in your home. Some require you to take out a permit to board, while others may not allow you to board in your home at all due to zoning regulations. Be aware that even if you are boarding one or two pets in your home at a time, and are being paid for it, this would likely be considered a home-based business. Many communities have specific zoning laws that stipulate what types of home-based businesses are allowed in each community. To protect yourself, be sure to consult with your town/city, county and state officials to be sure you are operating legally. Otherwise, you may one day be hit with an unexpected fine and/or a cease-and-desist letter.

Now let's look at your in-home pet care in terms of liability risk, and how it differs from traditional pet sitting in your clients' homes. When you are paid to take care of a client's pet in your personal residence, you cross a line in the insurance world from personal to commercial (business) liability exposures. Some may believe they are automatically covered if they have a homeowners or renter's policy, which typically includes personal liability coverage at their premises. However, most homeowners/renters' policies specifically exclude coverage for business-related liability claims. That said, if a dog or cat in your care were to bite someone while at your personal residence or bite/injure another pet in your care, you better have a business liability policy that specifically provides coverage for your in-home pet care, including veterinary medical coverage for those pets in your care. Otherwise, you'll more than likely be reaching for your own pocket to pay the claim. Most insurance companies are hesitant to offer this coverage, due to crossing the line between personal and business liability exposures.

For example, what if you were to invite a friend over and that friend were to be bitten or knocked down by a dog in your care? Or, what if a plumbing or pest control contractor performing work at your home were to be injured by your client's dog? Or how about the Amazon or Walmart delivery person being attacked by the client's dogs while delivering your grocery order? To illustrate, let's look at a couple of actual claims examples:

1. While staying at the pet sitter's home, a client's dog got into an altercation with the pet sitter's boyfriend's dog. The boyfriend attempted to break up the fight. He was bitten several times on the hands, arms and leg while attempting to separate the dogs. **Total paid: $6,471**.
2. A pet sitter was providing daycare for two separate clients' dogs. Just as she was opening the front door to her home, a delivery driver was taking a picture of a package on the front porch. Both dogs rushed out the door, and the delivery driver was bitten by one on his left leg. **Total paid: $11,717**.

When boarding clients' pets in your home, you need to factor these pets. If they have never been to your home before, they more than likely are not familiar with your home environment, including where things are, where you want them to hang out, or your family/personal pets, who may show up unexpectedly. When you are taking care of pets in the client's home — which is that pet's home — the pet knows all the above. The client's pet is also more accustomed to their household routine, including all the people sharing their home and immediate surroundings, as well as friends, neighbors, and family members that may show up from time to time. By bringing these clients' pets to your home, you just might rock their world, or cause

them injury! Here are some case examples:

1. A client's dog spending the night at the pet sitter's home attempted to jump off the back deck of the home and broke his leg upon landing. **Total paid: $3,651**.
2. A client's dog began chewing up wall board and ate into sheetrock while staying at the sitter's home. The dog unfortunately passed away due to toxicity. **Total paid: $6,217**.
3. A client's dog chewed up and swallowed pieces of a tennis ball while staying at sitter's home and required surgery. **Total paid: $6,798**.
4. A pet sitter was taking care of a client's dog in her home. The dog attempted to play with the sitter's personal cat, but the cat scratched the dog on the nose and in the eye. **Total paid: $2,174**.

If you are providing in-home boarding and are boarding more than one client's dog at a time, you run the risk of dog fights/dog injuries. This is by far the number one claim we see arising out of in-home boarding operations. The fact is that dogs may get along great with other pets in their own household, but if you put them in with other pets from other families without caution, you may be in for a rude awakening. Most animal shelters and boarding kennels are aware of this exposure and typically perform temperament tests before placing dogs in a playgroup together.

It is highly recommended that if you are going to provide in-home boarding and daycare for multiple dogs at your residence, that you do the same. In some cases, dogs may have not been socialized, or accustomed to other dogs in their personal space, and some suffer anxiety or become stressed if outside of their own home environment. In other cases, we have seen that some dogs are simply more prone to aggression when around other dogs to attempt to lead the pack.

Here are a couple more examples of what can go wrong:

1. A client's dog was spending the night at a pet sitter's home and got into a fight with

Recent Liability Claims

Here are recent examples that represent general liability scenarios:

1. A pet sitter was keeping multiple clients' dogs at her home. Two dogs got into a fight and one dog was injured. **Total paid: $2,079**.
2. During a dog walk, a client's dog in a pet sitter's care slipped out of his harness and was hit by a car. **Total paid: $5,950**.
3. While performing overnight sitting at a client's home, a pet sitter damaged the client's floor, kitchen countertop, and failed to provide adequate care for the client's dog. The dog had to go to the veterinary clinic upon their return. **Total paid: $7,250**.
4. A client's dog consumed a string of toys left on the client's couch by the pet sitter. Unfortunately, the dog required veterinary care and surgery to remove it. **Total paid: $5,837**.
5. A pet sitter was walking a client's dog and crossed a busy street at a cross walk. Unfortunately, the dog was behind the sitter, and was hit by a turning car that did not see the dog, and apparently did not stop. **Total paid: $1,824**.
6. A pet sitter lost the client's house and car keys. Both had to be replaced. **Total paid: $1,005**.
7. A pet sitter was grooming a client's dog during a visit. The sitter clipped the thigh area of the dog with the clippers. **Total paid: $655**.
8. A client's dog escaped from a pet sitter's backyard and suffered injuries when hit by a car. **Total paid: $5,806**.
9. A pet sitter brought a client's dog back to her home for daycare. While there, the dog chewed up a patch of carpet in her home and ingested several pieces. After vomiting and diarrhea, the dog was taken to the veterinary clinic. **Total paid: $1,800**. Unfortunately, the pet sitter's carpet was not paid for, as the damage was to their own personal property, and not covered. It was also not covered by homeowners' insurance due to an exclusion that applied under the homeowner policy.
10. A dog walker was walking a client's dog through the front door of the client's apartment building. The door closed on the dog's tail, causing injury, and requiring amputation. **Total paid: $4,198**.

another client's dog. Both dogs required emergency veterinary care after the fight was broken up. One lost an eye and incurred multiple other injuries. The other required a few stitches. **Total paid: $13,612**.

2. Multiple dogs were being boarded in a sitter's home along with the sitter's two dogs. One of the sitter's dogs attacked two of client's dogs, causing injuries to each of them. One was severely injured and required extensive veterinary care. **Total paid: $9,355**.

In addition to injuries to clients' pets, please be aware that most business insurance companies providing liability insurance for in-home boarding and daycare exposure, including Century Surety, the insurer for the NAPPS liability program, exclude coverage for injuries to your personal pets and damage to your personal property (contents of your home). As this is yet another example of the crossover between personal and business exposures. So, if a client's dog in your care attacks your personal pet(s) and inflicts injury, or chews up your furnishings or personal belongings, you would be out of pocket for the cost to replace these items. You could purchase pet health insurance to cover accidental injuries to your personal pets, but make sure they will cover the exposure if you are operating a boarding or daycare out of your home. But unfortunately, most homeowners or renters policies exclude coverage for your personal contents when they are accidentally damaged by animals who are owned or in your care. Additionally, many insurers will also exclude injuries to pets in your care that are caused by your personal pet (although not the case with the NAPPS liability program insurer), so if you have a pet that can be aggressive or fearful around other pets, in-home boarding or daycare may not be ideal for your personal pets.

Depending on the number of pets you are caring for in your home, there is one additional exposure that can be a potential nightmare. That is when a fire or weather related catastrophe occurs. When you are pet sitting at a client's home, (and you have a commercial general liability policy in place), if you or your team member were to accidentally cause a fire, most pet sitter liability policies will pay for the property damage to your client's home and personal property, including their pets. However, if a fire or hurricane hits your home or the home of one of your staff, and your client's pets suffer injury, you would again be out of pocket. As under most all homeowners or renters' policies, there is a liability exclusion for operating a business. Your home or your staff member's home and personal property may be covered, but your client's pets in your care would not be. Please make certain your business liability policy includes an optional endorsement that provides coverage for pets boarded in your home, regardless of fault, as the NAPPS liability policy offers (and of course be sure to add it before you begin offering in home boarding and daycare).

Here are a couple of these claims examples:

1. A pet sitter came home to find her home on fire. At the time of the fire, she and her boyfriend were caring for 14 pets, two of which were their personal pets. Five pets passed away due to smoke inhalation before the fire was put out. **Total paid: $21,690**, including emotional distress for owners.
2. A pet sitter's home caught on fire while she was out running errands. Two clients' dogs were stuck inside and unfortunately, passed away. **Total paid: $14,975**, including emotional distress for the owners. ■

Recent Workers Compensation Claims

Here are recent examples:

1. A pet sitter's employee was walking down the hallway with a client's dog when the dog jumped up and knocked the employee to the ground, causing injury to her knee. **Total paid medical: $1,065**.
2. A pet sitter's employee was attempting to remove the dog's collar and was bit on the wrist. **Total paid medical: $1,886**.
3. An employee of a pet sitter was conducting daycare/play time at her home for several clients' dogs. One of the dogs became excited and bit her left leg causing injury. **Total paid medical: $1,398**.

David Pearsall, CIC, CWCA, is vice-president/co-owner of Business Insurers of the Carolinas, a multi-line commercial insurance agency specializing in insurance for pet service professionals since 1995. He is a licensed insurance agent in all 50 states and has held the Certified Insurance Counselor (CIC) designation and the Certified Workers Compensation Advisor (CWA) designation since 2002. David can be reached at 1-800-962-4611, ext. #214, or via email at DP@business-insurers.com.

By Arden Moore

Harness Google to Power Your Business

To effectively find and keep quality, loyal clients for your pet sitting business, you need to do more than depend on word-of-mouth, posting flyers or handing out business cards.

You need to harness the power of Google Ads. That can seem daunting and even expensive. But in a recent webinar presented to NAPPS members, the dynamic team of Cat Baker and Amy Spencer from Pro Pet Business came ready with affordable and effective answers. The pair, based in the United Kingdom, are regarded as experts in Google Ad strategy to benefit pet businesses in the U.K. as well as in the United States.

"We understand that your pet business is your passion," says Cat Baker, a leading canine behaviorist. "It's our mission to get you a return on your investment as quickly as possible so that your Ads can fund themselves."

Amy launched a six-figure pet business in 2012 and teamed up with Cat the past five years to help pet business owners not only meet but exceed their company's financial goals.

"Profitable pricing structure is dependent on what you want to make and taking into account your costs involved," says Amy. "So, it is important to work backwards as to what you want to earn, how many clients you want to work in a day, week, month and use these numbers to figure out your package prices."

Cat and Amy explained the different missions of Google Ads versus Facebook.

"Facebook is to get your business seen on the social media scene," says Cat. "Google is all about attraction marketing, People type in the Google search for a specific thing, like hiring a pet sitter. This is a very different behavior done with Facebook. People go to Google with the intent of finding a solution to a problem or hiring someone offering a service they want."

Keep in mind that the average time an individual now spends online is 6 hours, 26 minutes compared to just 5 hours, 28 minutes three years ago in 2020.

"Google remains in the top spot of the most visited websites in 2023," says Amy. "All the rest — YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagrams are a distant second."

Cat and Amy help companies obtain a return on their investment. "For every $10 you spend in Google, you should recoup $20, $30, $40 or more in business," says Amy. Pro Pet Business offers a free growth strategy session. They are available to design one-page websites, create Google Ads and produce monthly reports for their clients. ■

About Cat and Amy

Cat Baker and Amy Spencer operate Pro Pet Business based in Bromsgrove, United Kingdom. Their company provides effective done-for-you marketing for pet sitters, dog walkers, dog trainers, pet day care owners and groomers in the United States and the United Kingdom. Learn more at www.propetbusiness.com.

Earn NAPPS CEUs by Taking This Webinar Quiz!

NAPPS strives to keep members educated and up-to-date on issues facing our professional pet sitting industry. Any member who answers the questions will earn the CEUs.

Ready? Here are three questions pulled from the Legal Obstacles webinar presented by Laurie Chrzanowski on April 18th. Submit your answers to Cathe Delaney at cdelaney@petsitters.org.

1. Name one of the three cases mentioned by Laurie Chrzanowski in her webinar.
2. What is the name of the legal service she recommends for pet sitters that charges a monthly fee?
3. Why does she recommend keeping your personal account in one bank and business account in another?

The Debate on Caring for Indoor-Outdoor Cats

There is no question that there is a steady demand among pet parents to hire professional pet sitters to care for their cats. In some cases, the demand has warranted some pet sitting companies to shift and focus on feline-only care.

Feline popularity is sparking a new dilemma: how to handle pet sitting visits in homes in which cats have access to the outside?

Indoor-only cats live longer than outdoor cats, according to statistics from the Humane Society of the United States. Outdoor cats, on average, live to age 5 while indoor-only cats often live to their late teens, even early 20s. Cats with unsupervised access to the outdoors are also exposed to many dangers, including dog attacks, being hit by cars and exposed to parasites.

Gwen Peake, of Golden Gate Pet Sitter in San Anselmo, CA, reached out to NAPPS members recently on Facebook for guidance. One of her client's cats (with outdoor access) did not come back inside after dark. She searched for him and he finally reappeared.

Her question: "How do you manage these kinds of clients?"

Feline popularity is sparking a new dilemma: how to handle pet sitting visits in homes in which cats have access to the outside?

Among the responses from NAPPS members:

Yvonne Thompson Rosenberger, of Marietta Heart Hounds: "I live in Georgia, so there's a ton of coyotes everywhere. The client has an indoor outdoor cat and wants them in at night. If I let them know about all the wildlife they have around here, I've done my job."

Holly Holmes, of Pets at Home – Where They're Happiest: "I don't let them out, period."

Maria Vella, of South Bay Cat Sitting: "As a policy, they don't go outside while I'm sitting, not even the patio."

Rachel Reisner, of Cats and Hamsters: "Cats are all the way inside or all the way outside. If they are allowed outside, and the client insists that they must be allowed outside, I make it clear that I have zero control outside and that there's no guarantee that the cat will come back on time or will come back at all. Because the cat is coming back to them, not to the house."

Kim Fields, of Happy Pets, LLC: "It is one of my policies that we do not let cats outside while we are caring for them."

Margaret Tucker, of Tucker'd Out Pet Services: "Many years ago (decades before I was a pet sitter), I had indoor/outdoor cats and my cat sitter insisted they be indoors only while in his care. He was right and I do the same now."

Sharon Wanamaker, of Exotic Pet Pals: "Since I only provide drop in visits, my policy is that indoor/outdoor cats need to stay inside for the duration of the client's trip."

Bryon Kerchner, of J Walking Pet Services, LLC: "I will not let a cat out under any circumstances. If they are out when I begin the job, I will give them every opportunity to come in, but I will not go search for them. Once they do come in, they are in until their owners come home."

Lindsay Dixson, of Pet Concierge, LLC: "I normally don't, makes me uncomfortable. However, I had one client that I allowed it. Only under the circumstances that I would come at a set time, for a set time period. I would lock them in if they came during that time. Otherwise, they would be left out. The client was okay with that." ■

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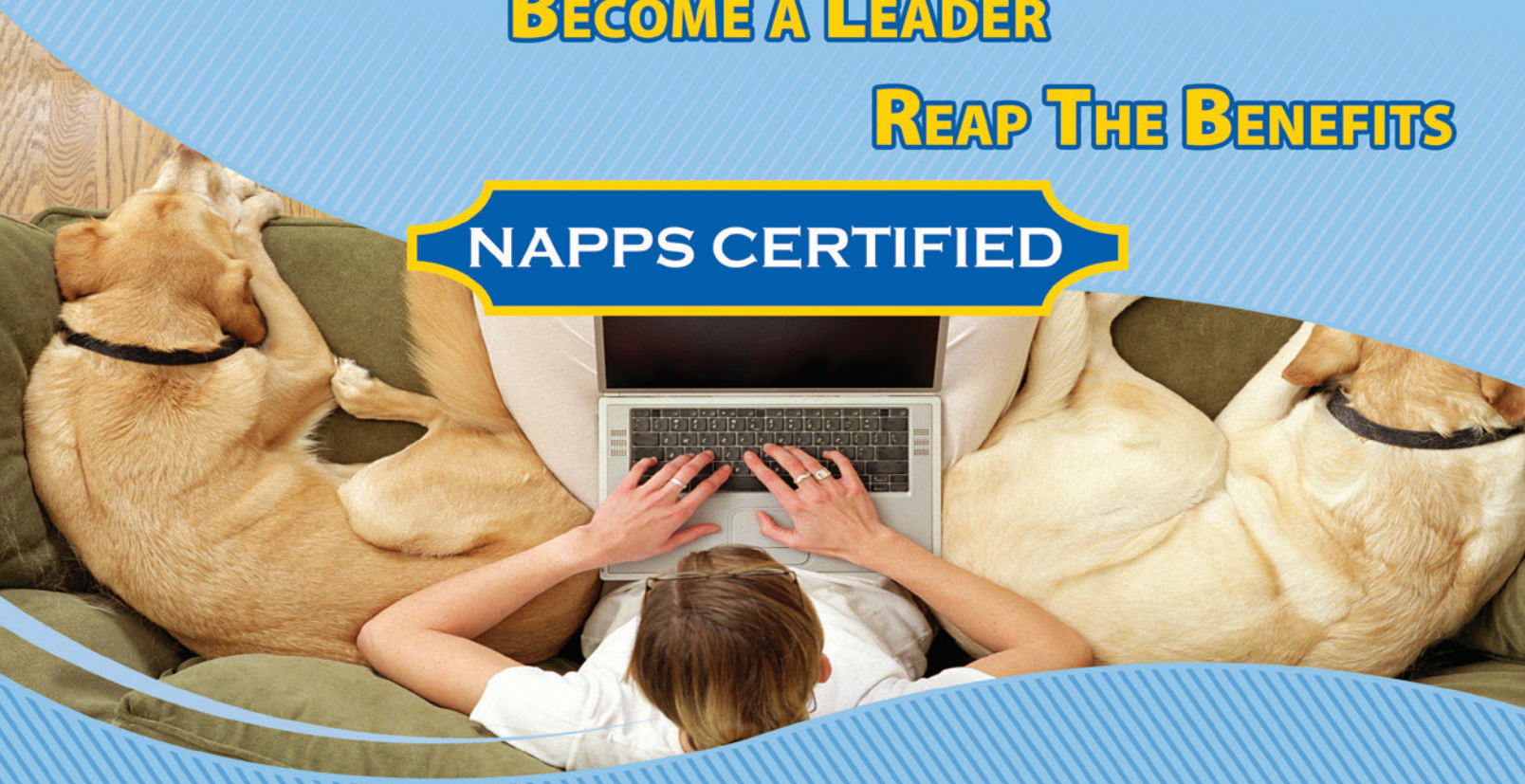

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Meet Volunteer of the Quarter: George Lockwood

By Arden Moore

As the founder of Legends Pet Care Services, LLC, George Lockwood enjoys walking clients' dogs.

George Lockwood never planned to own a pet sitting business. He spent decades working his way up the ranks in the consumer and mortgage lending industry. In 2012, he retired as president of a credit union in Charleston, South Carolina with the full intention of playing golf and traveling with his wife, Irene.

But his life took on a new purpose when he hired a pet sitter to care for the family's dog.

He showcases this turning point in a short video posted on the home page of his Legends Pet Care Services, LLC., based in Summerville, South Carolina. Facing the camera with two of his staffers, George says:

"I'm a pet lover and years ago, I hired someone to take care of my dog and he forgot to show up. I was blown away. I decided that I had to do something. I started my own company to ensure dangerous mistakes like that would never happen again. You see, I am a veteran and both of these incredible ladies next to me are too. Because of our days in the military, we are reliable, disciplined and hold ourselves to the highest ethics. We are fully licensed, insured and bonded and pet first aid certified."

For his continued commitment to clients' pets and to NAPPS, George has been recognized as Volunteer of the Quarter. This honor is given to a NAPPS member who has demonstrated outstanding service to NAPPS and NAPPS members. George has been a NAPPS member since 2015, and served on the membership and membership benefits committees. He is now the Member Benefits Committee Chair.

Billed as a full-service pet sitting concierge service, Legends Pet Care Services offers clients many options on pet care. The website features helpful blog posts on topics ranging from safety tips for dogs riding in cars to health care tips on caring for cats with diabetes.

Like many other pet sitting companies, George struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic that saw the temporary loss of most of his clients.

"During the pandemic, my business went from full throttle to nothing," he says. "I had one client who was in Hawaii when the shutdown happened and was gone for four months. They had cats I cared for every day."

George used this time to rebrand his company, start the NAPPS certification course process and launch a new website. Business has steadily picked up and he has eight employees with plans to hire two to four more by the end of this year.

"I am big on training, and I want my staff to be the best trained that they can be," he says. "I make sure all are certified in pet first aid before they make their first client visit. Training is paramount.

In 2020, Legends Pet Care Services was voted the Nextdoor Neighborhood favorite for five different neighborhoods. He strives to be continually invested in his community.

MORE ABOUT GEORGE LOCKWOOD

He founded Legends Pet Care Services in 2015 in Summerville, South Carolina.
Birthplace: Born in New York City.
Military service: Joined the United States Navy at age 20 and served for six years with the rank of Seaman.
Family: Married to Irene for 43 years and they have a son named Paul. They also have a pit bull mix named Molly, who George nicknames Snoozy.
Favorite hobby: "I love to play golf and live in a golfing community. I shoot about 100 on most days and just wish I could swing like Freddie Couples."
Fun fact: George once had four fish tanks, a rabbit and a bird as pets.
Company motto: "We are there when you can't be."
Company mission: To enrich the lives of pets and their families by providing excellent pet care, peace of mind, trust and security.
Learn more: Visit www.legendspet.com

That is evident by the fact that his company recently achieved a goal of raising $2,000 for K9s for Warriors, a nonprofit that provides trained service dogs to military veterans.

"Through NAPPS, I got involved with K9s for Warriors," he says. "Helping animals and helping veterans are two things I enjoy doing.

George Lockwood, owner of Legends Pet Care Services, Inc., is proud to have well-trained employees, including Josh Loose and Dana Leonard.

George Lockwood loves spending time with his dog, Molly, who he rescued from a shelter.

In a move to be environmentally conscious, George eliminated the use of plastic poop bags and replaced them with ones that are vegetable-based and biodegradable from a company called Doggy Do Good.

"There are millions of plastic bags in landfills, and I thought, hey, there must be a better way," says George. "Using these biodegradable bags for poop is our way to help the local environment. They are bright green in color and a lot easier to open than the plastic dog poop bags."

One of the highlights for George this year was the opportunity to attend the NAPPS conference in person that was held in New Orleans in March.

"This was my first conference to attend, and I really enjoyed it," he says. "The in-person networking was great. I look forward to attending next year's conference in Savannah, Georgia."

He is honored to be selected NAPPS Volunteer of the Quarter and encourages more members to give back by serving on various committees.

"I was surprised and honored for this recognition," he says. "NAPPS has offered me all kinds of resources and training opportunities. And you know, I am big on training." ■

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT GEORGE AND LEGENDS PET CARE SERVICES, INC.

Office manager Dana Leonard: "George always knows how to speak to clients in any situation, making them feel at ease. Service is his No. 1 priority in all situations. There is no one solution for all situations and in pet care, we have seen it all. Being flexible with people and expecting the unexpected are two skills George has taught me. Thanks to him, I now truly understand the passion one must have to own and grow a business."

Client Dwight King who has two dogs, Zappa and Bella: "With George and his team, we have peace of mind knowing that if something were to go wrong, they have the knowledge to take care of our pets. Our pets really enjoy their company and are happy to see them when they arrive to provide pet care. One time, we were out of town and Zappa was not feeling well. But George came in and cleaned up the mess. He cleaned Zappa, the cage, the whole area. I don't know any other company that would have gone above and beyond like that."

Client Lisa Thomas, who has two cats, Gizmo and Leo: "My husband and I appreciate being able to go on vacation knowing that our kitties will be well taken care of. They come three times a day when we are out of town, and we like the updates that we get from them with each visit. They also water the plants and even take out the garbage on our trash day. We never worry about our cats when we're gone."

Client Aimee Casey, who has a dog named Remi: "The moment we met George, you could absolutely see his love for animals and that he genuinely cares. Putting your trust in someone to take care of your furry loved family member means so much, and George certainly checks all the boxes. He and his staff are truly a Godsend."

Upcoming NAPPS Webinars and Town Hall Meetings

Mark your calendars so you don't miss them! To obtain the ZOOM link for these webinars and town hall meetings, contact napps@petsitters.org or check for the info on the private NAPPS Facebook page.

A Professional Pet Sitter's Worst Nightmare
Date: Sept. 19, 2023 at 7 p.m. ET
Speaker: David Pearsall, of Business Insurers of the Carolinas

Town Hall Meeting
Date: Sept. 26, 2023 at 7 p.m. ET
Speaker: NAPPS Headquarters

Unlocking Additional Income
Date: Oct. 3, 2023 at 7 p.m.
Hosted by Roger Morgan of pawTree

Social Walks for Dogs: How and Why To Do
Date: Oct. 17, 2023
Speaker: Lennox Armstrong, of Canine Care

New Research Explores Ways to Improve Cat Gut Health

By Arden Moore

Because of being both prey and predator, cats tend to hide any pain or discomfort. As pet sitters, you may pick up clues about declines in their health by what they leave in their litterboxes or their behavior at mealtime. Evidence of hard or runny poop or vomited food are signs that a cat's gut health may be being impacted negatively and need veterinary care.

But until now, there have been little to no studies on cat gut health. Enter AnimalBiome. This pet biotech company, working with veterinarians, pet food companies, private research groups and cat parents, has created the first at-home gut microbiome tests for cats.

And its research centers around microbiomes, something not mentioned much in veterinary medicine 15 years ago.

"Microbiome is really a community of bacteria and tiny microorganisms that live in a cat's gut," says Dr. Holly Ganz, Ph.D., chief science officer and co-founder of AnimalBiome. "This community plays an important role not only in digestion, but it also interacts with the immune system's health and produces neurotransmitters. This is a very new area of research for cats."

Analyzing Gut Health in Cats

AnimalBiome is seeing the public's health for research into the connection between feline gut health and yes, their bathroom habits. That is why they have been seeking cat parents to submit their cats' poop samples to be analyzed. Think of it as the feline version of what people do using Cologuard for shipping samples to be tested for colon cancer.

"Our microbiome project is all about boosting healthy bacteria in cats," says Dr. Holly. "The gut is like a rainforest of microbes inside it."

"Our microbiome project is all about boosting healthy bacteria in cats and learning what medicine may be needed in order to help cats produce healthy bacteria," says Dr. Holly.

Now available from AnimalBiome are oral capsules — yes, poop pills — given to cats once a day for at least a month with the goal of putting healthy microbes back into cats' guts.

"So, by transplanting a little poop — these oral capsules — we hope to restore gut health in cats," says Dr. Holly. "Our oral capsules can put those native, needed microbes back into the gut and can especially benefit stray kittens who never had their mother's milk and deal with weaker immune systems than those kittens fully weaned by their mothers."

Hairballs, diarrhea and vomiting episodes can all pummel good bacteria in a feline gut. So can stress. All can cause inflammation and weaken the immune system.

"By giving poop pills, we can re-establish some of the good bacteria that were wiped out," says Dr. Tonya Cooksey, director of veterinary relations at AnimalBiome.

Dr. Tonya encourages cat parents to work with their veterinarians to select quality diets and if necessary, supplements for their cats. The nutrition from these ingredients not only fortify the body, but also fortify the healthy bacteria.

"More research on the diet-bacteria connection needs to be done, but we know that diet does matter for supporting health and for producing good bacteria in the body," she adds.

To learn more about these studies and the new oral pills, please visit www.animalbiome.com.

Total Gut Health for Dogs and Cats

Michelle Griffin is the CEO and Founder of MuttGut and KittyGut, a company that created a 3-in-1 formula containing prebiotics, probiotics and postbiotics.

In a question-and-answer session, Michelle offers these insights for pets' health:

Why is it important for pet parents/pet sitters to better understand gut health in cats and dogs?

Comfort and contentment come from within. Gut health causes many symptoms and behaviors in our pets. Just like their humans, pets can feel tired, depressed, bloated, and suffer with allergies if their guts are out of balance. Poor gut health leads to the build of bad bacteria and blockages that cause gas and irregular and smelly poops. Good guts keep your pets' inner workings comfortable, making them happier and improving their immune health. Improving your pet's gut can change their lives for the better.

Please explain the benefits of Urban Flora — pre-, pro-, and post-biotics.

Urban Flora is designed to reset the gut, as well as a total gut health system in one supplement. Prebiotics and probiotics are essential for a healthy gut. We combine a range of prebiotics and probiotics in a fermentation process with key ingredients to reduce acidity and support immune health. Fermentation produces Postbiotics which are key to the regulation of the immune system.

What ingredients are most essential for dogs AND for cats to ensure they have healthy digestive systems?

We love bentonite clay for its gentle cleaning and calming qualities, turmeric for its anti-inflammatory benefits and kelp to boost organic function and improve blood supply. These essential ingredients combined with the broad range of pre- and pro-biotics to make the Postbiotics in MuttGut and KittyGut unparalleled gut health supplements for pets.

To learn more, please visit www.muttgut.com. ■

Test Your Knowledge and Earn CEUs!

Answers can be found in this issue. Be sure to email your answers to cdelaney@petsitters.org and include the subject line: Summer 2023 Issue Quiz.

1. Which NAPPS member cited this compliment from a client in Media Mewsings: "You are an extension of our family."
   A. Liz Raitman
   B. Dawn Stevens
   C. Jana Shivers
   D. Gwen Peake

2. Which of the following pet apps preferred by pet parents is cited in the Industry News of Interest article:
   A. Puppr
   B. Dogs 'n' Parks
   C. iKibble
   D. All of the above

3. In David Pearsall's insurance column, what was the total amount of the claim paid due to a client's dog ingesting a string of toys and requiring surgical removal?
   A. $3,950
   B. $4,950
   C. $5,950
   D. $6,950

4. What is the name of the company led by Cat Baker and Amy Spencer that conducted a NAPPS Webinar on Google Ads?
   A. Google Pet Business
   B. ABCs of Website Ads
   C. Pro Pet Business
   D. Pro Dog and Cat Business

5. Where is the Legends Pet Care Services owned by George Lockwood located?
   A. Summerville, SC
   B. Charlotte, NC
   C. Savannah, GA
   D. Tallahassee, FL

10 Most Googled Questions About Dogs

Google has made it easier than ever to find answers to questions you may never have thought of before. Chances are good that your pet sitting clients may have run across behaviors that they find odd and mystifying. To help them, here are the answers to the top 10 most searched questions about "why does my dog do XYZ" on Google.

1. Why do dogs howl?

Dogs howl to communicate with one another to show solidarity or to verbally mark a territory. Sometimes, dogs howl in response to a siren or an alarm. It's a primal instinct of theirs that surfaces now and again.

2. Why do dogs eat poop?

Dogs eat poop because of hunger, nutrient deficiency or boredom. Science doesn't really know why dogs eat poop, but studies have found that dogs prefer fresh feces over old.

3. How do I trim my dog's nails?

Gently press on your dog's paw to get the nails to extend. Use safety clippers to trim back the nails a little at a time. Stop when you see a dark spot in the center of the nail. Give your dog a treat for good behavior.

4. How can I make my dog vomit?

Measure out 1 teaspoon of hydrogen peroxide for every 10 pounds of body weight, then draw up into a turkey baster or syringe without a needle. Squirt the hydrogen peroxide towards the back of your dog's throat.

5. How much Benadryl can I administer to my dog?

If you suspect your dog ingested a toxin and is not vomiting, it is safe to give your dog 1 milligram of Benadryl per pound of body weight. Make sure to consult with your veterinarian first. Read the label. The only safe antihistamine to give a dog contains only one ingredient — diphenhydramine.

6. How do I stop my dog from barking?

Perhaps one of the least desirable dog behaviors is incessant barking. Dogs bark for various reasons and you need to determine why your dog is barking in the first place. Dog training sessions may be necessary to get your dog to stop.

7. How long will my dog be in heat for?

Female dogs are in heat for about two weeks but may be fertile before their signs are obvious. Talk to the veterinarian in Bend about the benefits of spaying your dog.

8. What pain medication is safe for my dog?

You can give your dog 5 to 10 milligrams of aspirin per pound of body weight. But always call your veterinarian prior to giving your dog any over-the-counter medication.

9. How can I get my dog to be free from fleas?

Fleas typically require a multi-pronged attack. Use flea treatments from the veterinary clinic, bathe your dog frequently and use oral supplements to make your dog less tasty to fleas.

10. Why do dogs eat grass?

Dogs usually eat grass to settle an upset stomach, but their omnivorous nature means they're capable of grazing on grass as a snack. ■

10 Most Googled Questions About Cats

1. Why do cats purr?
There are multiple reasons why cats purr. They include comfort to kittens, expressing love and affection, contentment, and even healing. The purr of a cat falls between 25 and 140 Hz which is known to help with healing injuries.

2. Are cats nocturnal?
Cats are crepuscular instead of nocturnal. That means they're most active at twilight and the hours after sunset. While cats do most of their hunting at night, they adjust to just about any sleep schedule when necessary.

3. Why do cats sleep so much?
Felines expend a lot of energy when they're awake. They need their 15 hours of sleep to recharge their batteries and get ready for the next round of play and exploration.

4. Why do cats meow?
Cats primarily meow to humans because we don't do a good job of reading their body language. Otherwise, cats use body language and gestures to communicate with one another and tend to not vocalize.

5. What's the purpose behind a cat's kneading?
Kneading, or making biscuits, is a behavior that begins at birth. Kittens knead their mother's abdomen to get milk. They associate the motion with comfort and affection and continue the behavior throughout their life.

6. Why do cats like boxes so much?
Boxes make great places to hide in and explore and are irresistible for a creature as curious as a cat. Cats also like boxes for the sense of security they provide.

7. Why do cats have hairballs?
Cats are meticulous groomers and ingest a lot of hair each day. Some of it passes through the digestive system and into the litter box. The rest collects in the stomach and is regurgitated at random. Fun fact: a hairball is known as a trichobezoar.

8. Why do cats have whiskers?
Whiskers help a cat navigate through a room with low or no light and get a feeling for the air in the room. A cat's whiskers are as long as the width of their body and act as curb feelers. Never trim a cat's whiskers as they need them for their locomotion.

9. Why do cats eat grass?
Grass contains minerals and vitamins that help a cat with digestion and staying healthy. Cats eat the grass as a supplement, but also rely on grass to help them with hairballs.

10. How long do cats live for?
On average, cats live anywhere from 13 to 20 years of age with proper veterinary care and nutrition. Cats are starting to live past 20 with few complications due to advancements in the science of all things cat. ■

NAPPS Committee Spotlight

The NAPPS Membership Committee volunteers connect with new, current, and potential members in an effort to expand NAPPS' reach amongst professional pet sitters everywhere.

We are looking for enthusiastic and outgoing volunteers who are dedicated to improving the NAPPS experience and bringing our membership together. We strive to be the #1 resource for pet sitters and YOU can make a difference.

We salute these NAPPS members serving on the Membership Committee:

- Lennox Armstrong, *Canine Care*
- Kevin Johnson, *Planet Paws Pet Care, LLC*
- Kelley Parson, *Kelley Parsons*
- Celeste Reed, *Celestial Cargo*
- Nancy Shaw, *My Dog Walker & Pet Sitting, LLC*

Apply Now for Business of the Year!

The Business of the Year Award is presented to a member who has demonstrated outstanding business practices and vision in maintaining and growing their business.

Applicants for this award must complete the Business of the Year application and submit the application by the deadline indicated.

Your clients can nominate your business for this award.
A nomination form is available here.

The award recipient will receive the following:

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- Professionally prepared Public Relations Press Release prepared by headquarters
- Your company logo displayed on the NAPPS website for one year
- Recognition of your company during the 2024 NAPPS Conference
- Recognition of your company in the *Professional Pet Sitter Magazine*
- Indefinite use of the "NAPPS Business of the Year 2024" logo

Submit your application today.

COME JOIN THE NAPPS PRIVATE FACEBOOK PAGE

THE AUTHORITY IN

PROFESSIONAL PET SITTING

NAPPS

Got an issue? Looking for answers to a situation? Turn to the private NAPPS Facebook page. This issue's topic centers on litter box cleaning tips.

WHAT IS YOUR POLICY ON MAXIMUM VISITS?

For those that do daily visits for pets when owners are out of town. Do you have a recommendation for your owners for the maximum number of days away the pets can handle?

— Jessica

COMMENTS

It depends on the pet and the relationship we've built with them. I am Fear Free Certified. When I start to see signs of increased anxiety or stress, I may suggest to the parent to increase the number of visits, the visit length, the amount of exercise, or adding an extended relaxing tuck in at night.

— Desirée

I don't have a recommendation, but I once took care of a diabetic cat twice a day for a month while the owners went to Europe. I spent extra time there sometimes just hanging out with the cat and reading or watching tv. They also had a friend come and do the same. The cat did fine. I didn't see any noticeable signs of stress. However, she was a very independent cat. My cat would not be able to do that. Our small poodle would probably be fine with a good pet sitter visiting and playing with her every day, but my cat is very attached to me and gets extremely lonely without regular attention. When my senior cat, his buddy, died in early February, I could tell he was grieving for a long time. If I were going to be gone that long, I'd probably have to have someone live in or have him stay with someone. I guess it really depends on the animal.

By the way, the friend who also visited the diabetic cat while the owners were away also covered for me a few days when my vacation overlapped. The friend was a long-time trusted friend of the owner and given that the owners were gone for a month, I did not feel that was the time to be picky about another person coming into the house. If it had been multiple people, that would be an issue. But in this circumstance, it was helpful to everyone including the cat. I could not be there all the time and the friend filled up some of that space.

— Kristen

Depends on how many cats are in the household, and can they keep each other company? The longest assignment I had was six months for four cats. But I house-sat there. I have visited one and two cat households for a month at a time, and the two-cat households do better. But individual mileage will vary.

— Ann

Depends on the specific animal and their needs. If it is a really long trip, you may want to ask for partial payment upfront and/or have them sign/agree to the invoice before starting the job.

— Lindsay

We often have clients travel out of the country for three to four weeks at a time. We will do extended visits if we notice they need more time/activity with someone. Usually, I will go to the home and spend time with the pets. The sitters usually get an idea of when the pets need more time and we let the parents know and add it on their invoice when they get back.

— Amy

The NAPPS private Facebook group is another way to connect with our members. Having this page will allow NAPPS to directly communicate our various benefits and programs as well as share information regarding various committees and how you can participate.

All of this while allowing you to connect with your NAPPS colleagues across the country.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESS:

Search either National Association of Professional Pet Sitters PRIVATE group or contact NAPPS directly at napps@petsitters.org. Submit a request to join (you will need to answer a few questions regarding your NAPPS membership). Once membership has been confirmed, you will have access to the group.

Please become familiar with the rules of the private Facebook group as they are in place to make this a pleasant, informative place to share and network. Moderators are available if you have any questions or concerns.

This is a NAPPS member benefit, so please be aware that if your membership falls into a lapsed status, your connection with this private group will be removed.

ENJOY! LEARN! SHARE!

2023 State of the Professional Pet Sitting Industry Report

The National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS) surveys its' members to gain perspective on several areas of the pet sitting industry. Among these, are current price structures, services offered, business structure, and growth of the industry. This survey of the pet sitters by NAPPS is published to aid pet sitters, our current members and pet parents to gain a deeper understanding of the professional pet sitting industry.

Thank you to all NAPPS members who took the time to complete the survey!

You can view the survey synopsis via the Other Resources / Industry Trends Section of the NAPPS Website.

NAPPS PR EFFORTS

Your association has an active public relations and marketing campaign that raises the visibility of NAPPS and its programs, and establishes NAPPS as the authority in professional pet sitting.

Each month, the NAPPS PR team provides regular story ideas to national media outlets designed to increase awareness of the organization and the entire profession.

PR efforts have surpassed many milestones!

NAPPS has a total number of Facebook "likes" of over 8,170 .

NAPPS has over 5,700 Twitter followers.

NAPPS is helping to increase awareness of pet safety and caring for animals during extreme weather conditions through shareable content like digital media and infographics.

"NAPPS for sure. It was a no brainier for me. The NAPPS organization is run by it's members and all volunteers. PSI is not. I support the industry that helps all of us and they don't get paid for it."

—Mary Vallavanti
At Your Door Pet Sitter
Fairhope, AL

When asked which professional pet sitter organization she prefers…
#petsitter #professionalpetsitter #petsitterassociation #NAPPS #NAPPScertified #FindAProNAPPS #DogWalker #Catsitter

May 9, 2023

When you need to leave home for a vacation or possibly for work, figuring out what to do with your pet can leave you feeling stressed. You want to ensure your furry companion is well taken care of when you're not around. Get some great tips and info on the NAPPS blog.
https://petsitters.org/.../ImportanceofKeepingyourPetatHo... #petsitter #professionalpetsitter #petsitterassociation #NAPPS #NAPPScertified #FindAProNAPPS #DogWalker #Catsitter #NAPPSblog

May 19, 2023

NAPPS- during Covid we had networking meetings over Zoom, they actually called all their members to see if they were doing ok over the Covid period and if they needed anything (that blew me away) educational classes that still continue today. Their library is a treasure trove. You have all experience levels. The information is amazing. I was part of PSI - you could tell it was a for profit organization. I was part of them for 16 Yrs and decided to look at NAPPS. I wish I did sooner. Just over all an amazing organization that cares for their members. I was a veterinary nurse and have been doing this professionally for 20 years and STILL learn new things. This field is always evolving and NAPPS professional enrichment classes never let me down!

Michelle Moser (Dailey)
The Purrfect Pet Nanny,LLC
Phoenixville, PA

When asked which professional pet sitter organization she prefers…
#petsitter #professionalpetsitter #petsitterassociation #NAPPS #NAPPScertified #FindAProNAPPS #DogWalker #Catsitter #NAPPStestimonials

May 23, 2023

The NAPPS Business of the Year Award is presented to a member who has demonstrated outstanding business practices and vision in maintaining and growing their business.

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- Recognition of your company in the *Professional Pet Sitter Magazine*
- Indefinite use of the "NAPPS Business of the Year 2024" logo!

Submit your application today:
https://files.constantcontact.com/.../f9cbdff4-4ed1-426a...
#petsitter #professionalpetsitter #petsitterassociation #NAPPS #NAPPScertified #FindAProNAPPS #DogWalker #Catsitter
#businessoftheyear

June 13, 2023

Not all midday dog walkers are the same! It's important that you've chosen the right person to take care of your beloved pet. Hang on to this infographic or send it to someone looking for a professional dog walker!
#petsitter #professionalpetsitter #petsitterassociation #NAPPS #NAPPScertified #FindAProNAPPS #DogWalker #Catsitter #infographic

June 6, 2023

BUSINESS INSURERS OF THE CAROLINAS

Proudly Insuring Pet Service Providers Since 1995!

-- Am I covered?
-- Do I have the coverage I need?
-- Am I paying too much?

Is finding the right insurance giving you a headache?

Call us today at
1-800-962-4611 ext 214
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http://napps.petsitterinsurance.com

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We Provide All of the Following Coverages:

General Liability • Property • Workers Compensation • Auto • Inland Marine/Grooming Equipment • Bonding • Employment Practices Liability • Umbrella

Welcome Our New Members

NAPPS welcomes new members who joined between March 16, 2023 and June 19, 2023. Here they are in alphabetical order by state and foreign countries:

Arizona
Michelle Primm, Premier Pet Sitters, Queen Creek
Alicia Hodges, Alicia's Pet & Home Care, LLC
Kylee O'Malley, Paws 'N Play Pet Services, LLC

California
Dianna Foster, D&D Critter Sitter and Taxi Service, Salinas
Maria Vella, South Bay Cat Sitting, Rolling Hills Estates
Laura Quijada, QWalkies, Los Angeles
Michelle Dutto, HMB's Fairy DogMother, LLC, Half Moon Bay
Karen Heggarty, Karen Heggarty Pet Sitting Services, Nevada City
Robert Atzet, WildWalks, LLC, San Diego
Shanin Torrez, Pawsitive Pup Vacation, Escondido
Stacee Evans, West Hills Pet Sitter, LLC, West Hills
Victoria Stover, Torie's Tiny Paws Pet Sitting, Villa Park
Jared Solomon, San Diego Dog Walker, San Diego

Colorado
Sarah Groh, Sarah Sit and Play, Colorado Springs
Melanie Mikelson, A Pawfect Companion Pet Sitting, LLC, Westminster
Maria Plafcan, Maria's Hands and Heart, Boulder

Connecticut
Melanie Gordon, Mutts and More, Deep River

Florida
Amanda Altavilla, Miami K9 Company, Miami
Victoria Fields, Pawsitive Pet Services, LLC, Tallahassee
Christa Bingel, Paloozapets Farm & Pet Sitting, Crawfordville
Katherine Fuller, Kathy's Pet Service, New Port Richey
C. Sakadales, Happy Tails Sitting and Walking Services, LLC, Port Charlotte
Bernadette Bannon, Tail Wagging Pet Sittin, St. Augustine
Katie Casell, Dances with Dogs, Miami
Catherine Grimes, Dirt Road Dog St Aug, St. Augustine.

Georgia
Shawn Martin, Fetch Pet's Atlanta, Atlanta
Ronda Hoffman, Post Pet & Mini Farm Care, Jasper
Kim Williams, My Buddy Pet Sitting, Kennesaw

Idaho
Kristen Vollrath, Cloud Nine, Wilder

Illinois
Amanda Spataro, Amanda Everything Pets, LLC, Willow Springs

Louisiana
Taylor Van Ness, Van Ness Pet Care, LLC, Belle Chasse

Maine
Kelly Rodgers, Unleash ME, LLC, Yarmouth

Maryland
Leslie Dieter-Roach, Little Dog Leslie, Rohresville
Denise Douce, Gentle Paws Pet Sitting, Baltimore
Alexis Greenwell, Jungle House Creature Care, Glen Burnie

Massachusetts
Jon Scrima, Pet Medic Response, LLC, Everett
Colleen Beaton, Little Paws Playhouse, West Roxbury
Amelia Wilson, Pomeroy Pup Pack, Easthampton
Angela Watts, Pawsitive Dawg Walking and Pet Sitting, LLC, Waltham
Armando Lujan, Highland Hounds of Roxbury, Roxbury
Nicole Hoffman, The Buddy System for Pets, LLC, Fall River

Michigan
Dawn Rinz, Dawn Pawz n All Pet Care, Walled Lake

Minnesota
Trent Knutson, Carrot-Top Dog Walker, Saint Paul
Chera Engstrom, Ma & Paws Critter Care, New Hope

Nebraska
Kristin Holzapfel, Pampered Pupperinos & Pals, LLC, Omaha

New Hampshire
Sally Caffrey, Pets 1ST, Grantham

New Jersey
Ka Wing Candy Chan, Unreasonably Loving Pet Sitters, Fort Lee
LeeAnn Mitchell, Paws N Purr, LLC, Pennsauken
Kate Ballas, Kate's Canine Care, LLC, Matawan

New Mexico
Laura Downey, Roadrunner Home and Pet Sitting Services, LLC, Las Cruces

New York
Bill McDonald, Sanco, Geneva
Gilberto Lorenzo, Long Island Pet Service, Uniondale

North Carolina
Xiomara Irizarry, West End Collars, Winston-Salem

Ohio
Mojgan Cline, Sanctuary Pet Service, LLC, Akron

Oklahoma
Justin Mathews, Paws on the Pavement, Ponca City

Oregon
Nina Poliakoff, The Pet Buddy, LLC, Portland

Pennsylvania
Beverly Patton, Mellow in Your Home, State College
Malachi Carrick, Urban pet Sitting & Dog Walking, LLC, Wrightsville

South Carolina
Erin Brady, Pet Care Extraordinaire by Erin, Ravenel
Lori Roszak, The Dog Nana, Beaufort

Tennessee
Kimberly Burton, Kim's Precious Paws Pet Services, Lebanon
Linda Bloomer, Animal House Critter Services, Powell

Texas
Renee Gunn, The Sterling Pooch Pet Services, Cleburne
Estela Ordonez, PETfect Care, LC, Houston

Virginia
Evelyn Tuel, Wandering Whiskers, Chesterfield
Morgan Kittinger, WAFS In-Home Pet Sitting Services, Boone Mill
Sandra Marenholz, Happy at Home, Charlottesville
Beverly Ellis, B Cares Pet Services, Aldie

Washington
Courtney Maccario, Bark to Barn, Camano Island
Shari Bradbury, Positive Touch, Rolling Bay
Karin Borgerson, Parker PetSitting, Seattle

Wisconsin
Carmen Bradley, Little Duck Pets and House Services, Madison

PET SUMMER SAFETY GUIDE

Beat the heat and keep your pets safe this summer!

DON'T WALK YOUR PUP DURING PEAK SUN HOURS

Don't Walk Your Pup During Peak Sun Hours. Avoid walking your dog during the hottest part of the day. If you're unable to walk your dog when it's cooler outside, hire a professional pet sitter.

APPLY SUNSCREEN

Although fur helps provide protection, areas around your pet's **mouth**, **ears** and **belly** remain susceptible to sunburn. Use sunscreen made specifically for dogs to give your pooch an extra shield from the harmful rays.

FIND SHADE

When playing outside, make sure there's plenty of shade for **cooling down** and always make sure your pet has clean, fresh water.

DODGE HOT ASPHALT

Hot concrete and asphalt can burn your pet's sensitive paw pads. If it's too hot for you, it's too hot for your pet.

KEEP YOUR PET HYDRATED.

Always use caution when leaving your dog outside, especially when you're away from home. If your pet is outside, make sure they have access to shade and clean, cool water.

SOME PETS ARE MORE LIKELY TO OVERHEAT

Special care and observation should be taken with dogs who are prone to overheating. This includes short-nosed dogs (such as pugs), senior and geriatric pets, as well as pets on medication or those who have specific health conditions such as diabetes and liver or kidney disease.

DON'T LEAVE YOUR PET IN THE CAR

NEVER leave your pet alone in a parked car—even if it's just for a few minutes. Cars can heat up quickly and can cause heatstroke and hyperthermia, which can result in death.

DOG HOUSES AREN'T COOL

DON'T rely on a dog house to shield your pup from the sun. Make sure dog houses are in the shade and have proper ventilation because a dog house can be just as dangerous as a hot car.

KEEP YOUR YARD PET-FRIENDLY

Make sure you use pet safe products in your yard. **Azaleas**, **lilies** and certain **plant food** can be fatal to pets.

PET-FRIENDLY PLANT FOOD

CHARCOAL

KEEP GRILLING SUPPLIES OUT OF REACH

Dogs love hanging out by the grill and they might mistake something like **charcoal briquettes** for food and become sick.

BE AWARE OF CAR COOLANT

CAR COOLANT

Coolant that leaks from your car or is left out is extremely dangerous for pets. Pets enjoy the smell and may drink the coolant, which can be fatal.

You can download this infographic via the Members Only Section of the NAPPS website.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PET SITTERS

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PET PARENTING OR PROFESSIONAL PET SITTING
www.petsitters.org