

Citizen Canine's **Dog Friendly Rental Program**

A PROPERTY OWNER'S GUIDE

As a property owner, do you want to

- Enhance profitability?
- Lower your vacancy rates?
- Reduce turnover?
- Broaden your pool of prospective tenants?
- Promote a sense of tenant safety and security?
- Rent to happy and satisfied tenants?

Then consider the benefits of opening your doors to responsible dog owners as renters



Citizen Canine's online [Business Directory](#) is a free, convenient and effective way to increase your pool of well-qualified prospective renters. Our growing list of dog-friendly rental properties is provided to a hundreds of prospective tenants. All property owners and managers are invited to list their "well-behaved dogs welcome" or "dogs considered" rentals.

¹Adapted with permission from materials originally produced by the San Francisco SPC

Landlords Say Yes to Dogs

Experiences of property owners who rent to dog owners

The words “dogs okay” sure brings in the calls, says Eileen Richards, owner of several houses and duplexes who has been in the rental business here for six years. “I make it my policy to always consider renting to dog owners. You get a different type of person when you advertise that you take dogs--people who are looking for long-term rentals and are appreciative of finding a nice place to call home. I think pet people are more stable tenants.”

Eileen always screens applicants carefully and she checks with the potential tenant’s previous landlord to be sure there haven’t been any problems in the past. “Then I establish a few basic rules and get a signed agreement and I’ve had very few troubles,” she says. “In fact, having a dog on the property can be a deterrent to break-ins and increases security in the building.”

Apartment owner Rob Simpson looks for responsible people as renters and says he prefers to rent to dog owners. “I think it takes a responsible person to properly care for a pet--and that type of responsibility extends to their taking care of the property,” he says. “I’ve had good success with renting to people with dogs as long as the expectations are clearly set out. I think that responsible pet owners actually make better tenants because they value their rental accommodation.”

“I’ve never had problems with people who have pets,” says property owner June Becker, “but I’ve had problems with people who don’t have pets!” Becker always checks references from previous rental situations and makes a point of meeting the dog to see if it’s well groomed and well behaved. She sees this as an indicator of the potential tenant’s responsibility. “I don’t find it necessary to charge a pet deposit but I make sure that some basic ground rules like “Pick up after your dog,” are established from the start,” she says.

Dogs in Rental Housing: Myths and Realities

Myth: If I let one tenant have a dog, I'll have to let everyone have one.

Reality: Many landlords fear that if they allow dogs they will be overrun with irresponsible pet owners and the problems they create. But with a few simple procedures and precautions, landlords can successfully screen out these people without penalizing responsible dog owners who will make excellent tenants.

Myth: One might be okay, but more than one is just too many.

Reality: In some cases, a second pet may actually make life easier all around. Most companion animals, including dogs and cats, are social beings and companionship is one of their highest priorities. For a pet that spends a lot of time alone, a playmate will help alleviate boredom. And the playmates need not be of the same species: many dogs and cats, for instance, can become the best of friends when raised together or properly introduced.

Myth: Dogs need big back yards and someone to be at home with them all day.

Reality: Dogs do need regular exercise and a chance to spend time with their human caretakers. But when these requirements are met, dogs can be happy in the city or in the country. Convenient access to leash optional dog parks makes exercise and socialization fun for both owner and dog.

Myth: Small dogs are ok, but big dogs just aren't suited to apartment life.

Reality: It's not a dog's size that determines how well it will do in rental housing; it's a dog's energy level and exercise requirements that are important. Many large dogs tend to be more laid-back and

easy going that their tiny counterparts. More active breeds may require a greater commitment from their owners to ensure these animals get the exercise they need. Other factors, such as age and temperament, can also be important. Older dogs, even large ones, are generally less active than puppies.

Myth: If I allow a dog in my rental property it will chew things and do a lot of damage.

Reality: Most puppies go through a period of chewing as their adult teeth emerge but adult dogs rarely chew on things. There are ways that responsible owners can prevent puppies from doing damage during the teething period. Your pet agreement should specify that the tenant will be responsible for repairing any damage caused by the dog.

Myth: Dogs can spread diseases to other pets and people in my apartment block.

Reality: Dogs can be protected from diseases through a routine vaccination program. Ask your tenants to show proof from a veterinarian of vaccinations and make sure they are responsible about picking up after their dog and you should have no problems.

Myth: If I allow dogs in my complex they will bark all day and bother other people in the complex.

Reality: While it is expected and normal that dogs will bark from time to time, usually this will occur only if there is someone at the door. This type of “alarm barking” can be a positive thing as it alerts tenants to unexpected visitors or unusual occurrences. Most dogs do not bark for long periods, but if a dog does bark excessively, there are ways that a responsible owner can solve the problem. As a last resort there are bylaws about excessive noise from dogs and the municipal bylaw enforcement officer can deal with it.

SUCCESSFUL PET POLICIES

A Guideline for Property Owners

Here are some guidelines for property owners to consider when setting up a pet policy. These are not hard and fast rules; policies for individual properties should be designed to best meet your specific needs.

Start with screening

Careful screening of prospective tenants is the first step to a successful pet policy. By asking a few simple questions, property owners can screen out irresponsible pet owners and find the responsible ones who will make good tenants.

You can adapt the PET APPLICATION for use as part of your application process.

Put it in writing

A written agreement protects the interests of both the property owner and tenant, and pet rules and procedures will help avoid misunderstanding. See the sample PET AGREEMENT and PET POLICY.

Charging pet deposits

These may vary, depending on the nature of each rental. In British Columbia, landlords may charge up to one half of the first month's rent as a security or deposit, as well as an additional one half month's rent as a pet deposit.

Set parameters

Should certain types of pets be confined to the tenant's apartment? Should other pets be permitted in all or only parts of the common areas? Should dogs be leashed within hallways and other communal areas? Should pet waste be disposed of in a specific manner or specific receptacle? It's important to establish pet regulations in advance—before any conflicts arise.

Ensure cleanliness

A responsible pet owner will agree to immediately pick up and dispose of dog feces, bag kitty litter before placing it in the garbage containers, and take other necessary sanitation measures. Owners should be prepared to provide evidence of flea control measures for pets that go outdoors.

Consider requiring spaying and neutering

Spayed and neutered animals are generally healthier, less distracted and better behaved, and may be more suited to apartment living than their unaltered counterparts. Tenants may request consideration of an exemption for their intact dog, for example for a working dog or a male in a breeding program. Include this information in your guidelines. It is reasonable to request a Veterinarian note, in this case, for the tenant's file.

Determine emergency arrangements

Property owners may want to get contact information from the tenant for substitute caretakers in case of emergency. Pet owners are responsible for their pets during mock evacuation drills and/or natural and man made disasters including gas leak, flood or fire. The better prepared the pet owner, the better care the pet will receive. To learn more about the responsibilities pet owners have during a created or natural disaster, please visit [Emergency Preparedness: Pets in Disasters](#).

Put disciplinary procedures in writing and enforce them fairly

These procedures might include a provision for warning(s) before any punitive measures are taken. Whatever the policy, fair and consistent enforcement will reduce disputes and make for better relations between management and tenants.

Tell tenants about available services

Dog owners in Victoria are fortunate to have many services and resources at their disposal. Dozens of dog walkers and pet sitters are available in the region, as well as dog training classes and low-cost spay/ neuter clinics. Citizen Canine offers dog related health and behaviour information through our newsletter “The Scoop” and dog owners are welcome to access helpful resources through [our forum](#) and our [business directory](#).

E-mail or write your comments and questions to us at info@citizencanine.org



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A Checklist for Landlords in search of a responsible pet owner

The following is a list of questions for property owners to use when interviewing prospective tenants with pets. These questions are intended as a starting point to help property owners get to know a tenant and his or her commitment to providing responsible pet care.

We recommend property owners ask prospective tenants to bring their pets to the interview. State your expected interview time in advance so that the owner can prepare their dog. A well-groomed, exercised pet is one of the best signs of a responsible dog owner. You can make the dog more comfortable by using an open room for the interview.

For all pet owners:

- What type of pet do you have?
- How long have you had it?
- Do you have a letter of other documentation from your veterinarian stating that the pet is in good health and is up-to-date on all of his/her vaccinations?
- Have there been any complaints about your pet at your current address? If so, was noise the issue? Aggression? Allergies? Was the complaint resolved to everyone's satisfaction?
- May I contact your current landlord to discuss your pet further?
- May I visit you and your pet at your current address to see how you are getting along?
- Would you object to my checking in on the pet after you move in?
- Are you willing to provide contact numbers, and the name of a kennel for your dog in the event of emergency?
- Are you willing to sign a pet agreement?

- Are you willing to submit a receipt as proof of annual professional carpet cleaning?
- Are you willing to provide a copy of your insurance policy for your file?
- Who will care for your pet(s) when you go away on vacation or business?

For cat owners:

- Has your cat been spayed or neutered?
- Does your cat use the litter box you provide?
- Do you have a scratch post or a perch for your cat?
- Do you keep your cat inside?
- Is your cat on any kind of flea preventive program?
- Does your cat wear a collar and identification tag?
- Does your cat have any medical or behavioral problems? If so, what treatment/ training is he or she receiving?
- How does your cat get along with other animals? What about with people?
- Is your cat crate trained?

For dog owners:

- Has your dog been spayed or neutered?
- Is your dog housebroken?
- Is your dog on any kind of flea preventive program?
- Have you and your dog completed a dog obedience class?
- How and how often do you exercise your dog?
- Do you keep your dog on leash when you go for walks?
- Is your dog licensed in this municipality?
- Do you have microchip identification? Is the contact information current?
- Do you make a point of immediately cleaning up after your dog?
- How much time does your dog spend alone each day?

- Does your dog stay inside when it is alone?
- Is your dog inside at night?
- Does your dog have any medical or behavioral problems? If so, what treatment or training are you using to manage the concern?
- How does your dog get along with other animals? What about with people?
- Is your dog crate trained?

Note:

If the dog seems unsure during the interview, watch how the owner responds. A responsible owner will be aware of their pet and help them feel more comfortable. Dogs may pick up stress in the environment if the owner is anxious to create a good impression during an interview. If the dog appears “fidgety” or suddenly starts scratching as though it has an itch, be aware that these are normal behaviours for a stressed dog that may be attempting to calm the environment. By watching the interaction between dog and owner you can gain important information about the person’s attitude, commitment, and sense of responsibility toward the pet. Responsible dog owners are attentive, considerate people who make excellent, reliable tenants.

SAMPLE PET POLICY, PET AGREEMENT AND PET APPLICATION

The sample pet application, pet agreement (lease amendment) and pet policy forms below can be used by landlords as a starting point to develop pet rules and procedures for their own buildings.

While we believe the sample policy we have designed will fit the needs of most rental buildings, you should consider this policy in light of your particular situation and consult with your attorney before adopting a final set of rules or guidelines.

SAMPLE PET POLICY

STATEMENT OF VALUES

The management of this building encourages tenants to value and enjoy their apartments as they would their own homes. We believe that tenants should be given every opportunity to pursue their interests, consistent with the rights of their fellow tenants and the property owner(s). By fostering an attitude of mutual respect and cooperation, our common interest in a safe, pleasant, and well-maintained building is best achieved. In keeping with this philosophy, and after carefully considering all the interests involved, we have decided to adopt a limited pet policy that will allow tenants committed to responsible pet ownership to have a pet.

In reaching this decision, we have taken into account the important contributions that pets can make to the lives of people who value and appreciate animals. We have also considered the fact that there are people who wish to avoid contact with pets and other animals. The pet policy is designed to protect both pet owners and non-pet owners, and to ensure that the animals themselves receive responsible care. The policy applies to all pets kept in the building and will be strictly enforced. All tenants will receive a copy of the policy. By signing this pet policy, the tenant agrees to abide by the terms of this agreement. Failure to adhere to the terms of this agreement will initiate a proceeding to terminate the tenancy of the tenant, and subsequent eviction from the premises.

PET POLICY

1. Permission to keep a pet is granted at management's sole discretion and is subject to tenant's strict adherence to all aspects of this pet policy. Any tenant who wishes to keep a pet must first obtain management's approval and sign a pet agreement.

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

2. Only common household pets will be allowed. These include dogs, cats, fish, birds, rabbits, and rodents, such as guinea pigs and hamsters, kept as companion animals. No tenant will be allowed to keep more than _____ cats and/or dogs. Requests to keep more than one pet of any other species will be approved at management's discretion.

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

3. In making a decision on whether to approve a tenant's request to keep a dog, management will take into account the dog's temperament and the arrangements the tenant has made for training and exercising the dog.

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

4. Pets are to be kept inside the tenant's apartment. Dogs going in and out of the building must be on leash and under the tenant's control. If an off-leash area has been designated by management on the building grounds, dogs may be taken off-leash in that area provided the tenant remains with the dog at all times.

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

5. Tenants are responsible for keeping all areas where pets are housed clean, safe, and free of parasites, including fleas. Dog owners must immediately pick up and dispose of, in a sanitary manner, all dog waste deposited on the street or grounds. Cat owners must place

soiled cat litter in tied plastic bags and dispose of the bags in garbage pails designated by management.

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

6. All adult dogs and cats must be spayed or neutered, unless a veterinarian certifies that health problems prevent the dog or cat from being spayed or neutered. A copy of the Veterinarian's letter will remain in the tenant's file. All pets must receive proper veterinary care, including all appropriate inoculations; must be well-groomed, and must be given a healthy diet and exercised according to their needs. All pets must also be maintained in accordance with applicable state and local laws. Dogs and cats must wear identification tags at all times.

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

7. No pet is to be left alone in a tenant's apartment for a period longer than that which is appropriate in light of the needs of the individual pet. While this period may vary depending on the pet in question, landlord and tenant understand that, in general, dogs should not be left alone for more than 9 hours, and other pets for more than 24 hours, on a regular basis. When management has reasonable cause to believe a pet is alone in an apartment and either that pet is creating a disturbance or any other emergency situation appears to exist with respect to that pet, Management will attempt to contact the tenant to remedy the situation. If management is unable to contact the tenant within a reasonable period, management may enter tenant's apartment and make any necessary arrangements for the pet's care, including removing the pet and placing it in a temporary care, such as a boarding kennel. Any costs incurred will be deducted from tenant's pet deposit. (See #9)

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

8. Tenants are responsible for ensuring that their pets do not disturb or annoy other tenants or neighbours. Tenants whose pet(s) are determined by management to be disturbing others must remedy the

situation immediately. A tenant who fails to remedy the situation after __ warning(s) will receive a 30-day notice to remove the pet from the premises. If the tenant fails to remove the pet, the tenant will be considered in breach of tenant's lease or other rental agreement and may be required to vacate the premises.

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

9. Tenants are responsible for and must immediately pay for all damages or injuries caused by their pets. As surety, each tenant who wishes to keep a pet must pay a \$ _____ pet deposit upon signing the pet agreement. If the cost of repairing any damages caused by the pet exceeds the pet deposit, management may use funds from the tenant's regular security deposit to cover the excess. If management uses all or any portion of the pet deposit or security deposit to cover any pet-related damages or expenses incurred by management during the tenant's tenancy, the tenant must immediately restore the deposits to their full, original amounts.

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

10. The pet deposit is fully refundable with interest when management determines that there are no damages or other expenses caused by the pet(s) upon tenant's vacating the apartment or permanently relocating the pet(s).

Tenant initials confirm this clause is understood and agreed to: _____

I have read, understand and agree to the above pet policy in its entirety. I especially understand that failure to adhere to the terms of the agreement in its entirety will be considered breach of contract and will result in the termination of my tenancy of the premises.

Tenant(s)

Dated

SAMPLE PET AGREEMENT

This pet agreement is an amendment to the lease dated _____
between _____ and _____.
(Tenant) (Landlord)

1. Tenant has read and signed the Pet Policy attached to this agreement.
2. Tenant agrees to abide by the pet policy and landlord agrees to permit tenant to keep the pet(s) described in this agreement in accordance with the pet policy.

Type of Pet	Name	Age	Description
_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Tenant shall be liable for any damage or injury whatsoever caused by the pet(s) and shall pay landlord or landlord's agents or employees immediately, upon demand, for any and all costs incurred by landlord as a result of damage or injury caused by the tenant's pet(s).
4. Tenant agrees to indemnify, hold harmless, and defend landlord and all of landlord's agents and employees against all liability, judgments, expense (including costs and attorney's fees), or claims by third parties for any injury to a person or damage to property of any kind whatsoever caused by tenant's pet(s).
5. Tenant shall provide the following information and promptly notify landlord in writing of any changes:

Emergency caretaker for pet(s):

Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Address: _____ Telephone: _____
Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Address: _____ Telephone: _____

6. Tenant agrees that landlord and landlord's agents and employees have the right to enter tenant's apartment without prior notice, after notifying police, animal control or local SPCA, if there is reasonable cause to believe that a pet is creating a disturbance or any other emergency situation appears to exist with respect to the pet. Landlord or landlord's agents or employees may make any appropriate arrangements with respect to the pet's care, including removing the pet and placing it in a temporary home.

Landlord or landlord's agents or employees shall attempt to contact tenant before entering the apartment and shall enter only if they are unable to contact tenant within a reasonable amount of time. Upon entering, landlord or landlord's agents or employees may make any appropriate arrangements with respect to the pet's care, including removing the pet and placing it in a temporary home. Landlord or landlord's agents or employees may deduct any costs incurred from tenant's pet deposit.

7. By signing this agreement, tenant has agreed to the above and has paid the pet deposit of \$ _____. This deposit is fully refundable with interest when the landlord or landlord's agents or employees determine there are no damages caused by the pet(s) upon tenant's vacating the premises or permanently relocating the pet(s).

Tenant

Landlord

Date

Date

SAMPLE PET APPLICATION

Name of Tenant/Applicant: _____

Current Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Pet Information

List pet(s) you currently have:

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Name

Type

Age

Veterinarian

Are pets permitted where you now live? _____

Can we call your current landlord for a pet reference? _____

Name of current Landlord: _____

Telephone number: _____

How long have you and your pet(s) lived there? _____

Can we call any former landlords for pet references? _____

Name of former Landlord: _____

Telephone number: _____

How long did your pet(s) live there?

From: Date _____ Year _____

To: Date _____ Year _____

Responsible pet ownership references: Please list below references who know you and your pet and are willing to discuss your pet with us. You may choose to list people such as your neighbours, your veterinarian, groomer or your dog trainer as appropriate.

Name: _____ Telephone _____

Relationship: _____

Name: _____ Telephone _____

Relationship: _____