

Below is a list of things you may wish to check before you leave. However, these are just suggestions to help you prepare, and not must-dos!

1. Home owners checklist – before you go!

Home owners – use this checklist to make sure you're ready to hand over the care of your home and animals to your house sitter on the day that you leave.

1.1 Neighbours

Please let your neighbours, friends and family know that you have a house sitter moving into your home in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

1.2 Security systems

If you have an alarm system, you may need to make arrangements with the security company for a code and security password specifically for your house sitter to use. Any keys for window locks should be left with your house sitter.

1.3 Insurance

Contact your insurance company to let them know you will have a house sitter moving into your home.

1.4 Email

If you are currently using an email address that is dependent on your home internet service provider, you may need to set up a new address that can travel with you. There are many hundreds of good, free email service providers you can sign up with in less than five minutes..

1.5 Contact information

Please leave contact information so your house sitter can stay in touch while you're away. See the house sitting agreement for the contact information page.

1.6 Emergency contact

You may want to ask someone such as a friend, neighbour or relative etc to act as a nominated contact person for your house sitter to liase with in your absence.

1.7 Spare keys

Leave a set of spare keys with your nominated contact person or your house sitter.

1.8 Rubbish collection & recycling services

You need to make a note of which days your rubbish and recycling is collected. Have any recycling equipment available for your house sitter to use.

1.9 Compost

Make a list of what you would and wouldn't like your house sitter to add to your compost.

1.10 Animal documentation

All of your animal's records should be put together in a folder for your house sitter's easy access. These records could include: immunisations, tattoo, microchip, any lost pet register phone numbers, license, medical history and current medications.

1.11 Animal license

Please make certain your animal's license or registration will not expire while you are away.

1.12 Animal supplies

Please stock up on enough supplies for your animals while you're away. These supplies could include the following:

- food (main meals, dry food, treats, chewing bones, drinks)
- medications (flea, tick, lice, heartworm, worm and mange treatment – with dosage information)
- toys (indoor chewing and tugging toys, chasing toys)
- exercise equipment (lead, ball, towel, cold weather gear, muzzle, collar, harness)
- identification tags, tattoo or microchip (featuring a contact number or a link to contact details on a registration list – make sure this information is current!)
- bedding (basket, mattress with pillows, blankets or duvet, with spares for washing)
- cleaning and grooming equipment (medicated shampoo, towels, hoses, brushes, scissors, clippers)
- waste collection equipment (bags, gloves, litter, disinfectant)

1.13 Home contents list

You may like to make a list of items you don't want your house sitter to use.

1.14 Out of bounds

You may like to write a list of any areas or rooms in your house or on your property that you don't want your house sitter to use.

1.15 Pool maintenance

Have your pool equipment and chemicals available for your house sitter to use. Attach clear written instructions to these.

1.16 Parking

Describe what parking is allowed on or near your property including costs and restrictions. You may be able to arrange for a visitors parking permit for your house sitter to use.

1.17 Visitors policy

What is your preference for visitors to your home while you're absent? If you have strong feelings about a visitors policy, include this information in your house sitting agreement.

1.18 Rules and regulations

If your home is a condominium, a unit or a rental property, you may want to leave a copy of the by-laws or lease for your house sitter to refer to.

1.19 Subscriptions

You may want to suspend or cancel any magazine, newspaper or online DVD rental subscriptions you may have.

1.20 Pay-per-view TV

You may want to suspend or cancel your satellite or cable TV service.

1.21 Internet access

Ensure you advise your house sitter if there is a limit on internet usage with your internet provider.

1.22 Mail redirection

You may want to set up a redirection order for your mail – although this is what house sitters are for!

1.23 Home deliveries

You may want to suspend or cancel any regular home deliveries you may have including dairy products and organic vegetables .

1.24 Garden tools

Make sure your garden tools are accessible. Leave your shed keys out for your house sitter.

1.25 Indoor plant maintenance

Leave any supplies for your indoor plants out for your house sitter. Attach written instructions to these.

1.26 Lawn maintenance

Check that your lawnmower is in good working order. Leave a spare can of fuel for your lawn mower if required. Attach hoses to outdoor water supplies for watering your garden and lawn. Leave rakes and a wheelbarrow out for your house sitter.

1.27 Use of your vehicle

If you are happy to have your house sitter use your vehicle while you're away you need to do the following:

- ÿ familiarize them with your vehicle before you go
- ÿ add their name to your motor vehicle insurance policy
- ÿ have them confirm in writing that they will be liable for any costs and damages incurred while using your vehicle including paying any excess fees on any resulting insurance claim
- ÿ provide local driving regulation information for their reference

1.28 Maintenance of your vehicle

You may want to have your vehicle maintained in your absence. This could include asking your house sitter to start your car once a week and/or clean your car of leaves, dust and bird poo before your return.

1.29 Use of your bicycle

You may be happy for your house sitter to use your bicycle. Familiarise your house sitter with any security locks you may use. Write down any code for a combination lock and leave two keys for any D-locks.

1.30 Clean & tidy home and garden

It's a good idea to ensure your house and grounds are clean and tidy in preparation for your house sitter's arrival. Note that in the house sitting agreement your house sitter has agreed to maintain your home and garden to the condition that they first encountered it.

1.31 Perishable foodstuffs

You may want to empty your refrigerator of any perishable foodstuffs.

1.32 Storage space

You may need to empty some cupboards and drawers for your house sitter to stow their belongings.

1.33 Storing valuables & breakables

You may wish to store away your valuables and breakables in a secure area such as a locked cupboard or your attic space.

1.34 Clean linen

Put out clean bed linen and towels for your house sitter.

1.35 Transport maps

Local transport maps covering travel by bicycle, bus, train, tram and underground are invaluable for helping your house sitters get oriented.

1.36 Gas & electric

Leave instructions for the safe use of your electricity and gas services. Show your house sitter the relevant fuse boxes and cut-off switches.

1.37 Heating & air-con

Leave detailed instructions on how to program the heating and air-conditioning systems.

1.38 Cleaning & gardening services

You may want to suspend or cancel visits by your regular cleaner or gardener services.

1.39 Water & drains

Leave instructions on the location of your water mains tap and the means of access to your sewer system.

1.40 Tourist information

Mark up a local map with some of your area's best assets for your intrepid house sitter. Include your local supermarket, library, internet café, cinema, DVD rental shop, dog park etc.

Phew!

Well done...you've made it to the end of this list! Now you can leave your home knowing that we are exceptionally well-prepared to take on our duties and responsibilities toward you, your property and your animals. Relax and go.