

Why You Should Make House & Pet Sitting Part of Your Summer Vacation

The sun is shining and it is cottage season! With many people getting out of the city and to a lake, plans must also be made for the house left behind. A good alarm system cannot collect the mail, feed the cat, or water the tomato plants. It also can't detect a leaky hot water tank or broken air conditioner. For many reasons, hiring a house sitting service will ensure that your home and garden is cared for when you are away.

Selection – When choosing a service, ensure that the company has general liability insurance. Each employee should also be fully insured and bonded. Check the Better Business Bureau or ask for references to ensure that there is a record of reliable customer service.

Frequency – How often a sitter visits your house depends on the needs of your home and pets. The fine print of your home insurance policy is also a factor. We recommend to our clients that they verify what their insurance requires. When there are small pets such as cats, birds, or fish, daily visits are usually scheduled. Otherwise, a visit every second or third day may be adequate.

Service – A professional service will discuss with you the specifics of what needs to be done at each visit. For example; mail collection, switching lights, houseplant care, watering the garden, and taking out garbage and recycling bins. Walking through the house to check all windows, plumbing, furnace and air conditioning units is also important for your peace of mind and to be compliant with your insurance requirements.

Fees – Each visit is \$18 plus taxes, though costs may be higher depending on specific needs and location. A reputable company will give you their fees and the services they will perform in writing.

Over the years we've seen the value of house and pet sitting hundreds of times. Our Sitters have turned off garden hoses the homeowner didn't fully close, brought in large mail packages dropped off on the front steps, and secured doors left unlocked in the rush to leave. To ensure a stress free homecoming after your next business trip or vacation, consider booking a professional house and pet sitting service.

Rebecca Page is CEO of Concierge Home Services, a total household management company with four offices in Ottawa and two west of Toronto. This growing franchise company is perfect for women who want to balance business with home and family. To learn more, visit www.conciergehomeservices.com, or join on Twitter @ConciergeHomeS and on Facebook.

