

Choosing a Boarding Kennel

It is important to take your time to choose a boarding kennels to ensure peace of mind, look around the proposed accommodation to make sure that your dog will be as happy with their holiday as you are with yours. It is recommended to do this during opening hours and unannounced but if possible avoiding busy weekend/bank holiday periods. If a kennel owner is unwilling for you to look around then this is a concern and it is not advisable to leave your dog at such a premises.

- 1) **Licensing**-check that the proposed kennels is licensed by the local authority; this means that the kennels will be visited at least once a year by the council to make sure certain standards are met. The owner of a kennels should display a copy of this.
- 2) **Insurance**- check that the kennels has an up to date insurance policy to cover your dog should it become sick in your absence. This is vital in the event of an emergency as vet bills are often expensive.
- 3) **Vaccinations**- only board your dog at a kennels that requires up to date vaccinations including kennel cough. This protects your dog from contagious diseases, and the likelihood of coming into contact with them.
- 4) **Cleanliness**- Ask to see all of the kennels at the boarding establishment, looking for:
 - ~ Which size of kennel your dog would be put into (think if you are happy with this)
 - ~ The cleanliness of the kennels, there should be disinfectant near the kennels for use during cleaning (if not visible ask to see it)
 - ~If the kennels have recently been cleaned the floors may be wet
 - ~The kitchen/ food preparation area, looking again at cleanliness as well as organisation as to which dog eats what, especially if your dog is on a specialist diet/has allergies/medication.
 - ~ Enquire about kennel heating and when/how this is operated.
- 5) **Exercise areas**- ask to see where dogs are exercised; this could be an enclosed compound or field. Ask if exercise will be on lead? How often? How long for? Check if your dog will be allowed to mix with others off lead - dogs are often unpredictable and will only have been known to the staff for a short time (most important if your dog is not neutered or doesn't mix well).
- 6) **Staff**- Ask the staff about their training and experience, these will be the people who are looking after your dog so its vital they are knowledgeable. It is particularly important if your dog has a quirky temperament/ is of a large breed/ requires medication or is long coated and requires grooming.
- 7) **The Dogs**-Finally look at the dogs themselves, do they look happy? Are they clean? Do they look healthy? How do they react to the staff? Do they have fresh water?

It is best to look at a few kennels to see different methods and evaluate your choices, not every kennel will suit every dog. Once you have chosen your kennels it is recommended to put your dog in for a short stay (one/two nights) to check that both you and your dog are happy with the arrangement before a longer stay.

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