

Kennelling 101: helping you and your dog have the best kennelling experience possible

By Louise Yates

If you're new to kennelling, but uncertain about the process, here's a handy outline to help make it easy for you and your dog.

Preparing

Kennels are often full during weekends and holiday seasons, so it's best to plan your dog's stay when you're making the rest of your vacation plans. The first time you board, you'll provide your contact information and a complete profile for your pet. For each stay, you'll provide updates about your pet's health, arrival and departure dates and contact information for the time you'll be away.

If you've never used a kennel before and your first trip is a lengthy one, consider doing a trial run. Book your dog for a one-night stay so both of you can get familiar with the process.

Ensure that your dog's vaccinations are current, but not done just before the stay. Like people, some dogs feel punk after getting a vaccination, so it's best to let your dog hang out in the comfort of your home so they can sleep it off. Vaccinations we require are Parvo, Rabies and Distemper. Bordatella is optional. You and your vet can make the decision as to whether you want to get that one. We accept veterinary-endorsed titter counts in place of annual vaccinations. We have a two-week wait period between getting vaccinations and arriving at our kennels.

24-hours before

Pack your dog's bags. Here are some things to consider sending along:

- A leash and collar to be used for transportation.
- We provide food. If your pet is on a special diet, package their own food in serving-sized portions in containers labelled with your dog's name.
- If your dog is on any medications or supplements, provide clearly marked instructions.
- If your dog uses their crate at home, send it along, however, if they don't use it at home, don't bother.
- We provide blankets. If you want to send a blanket or towel, the best ones are easy to launder.
- Toys are optional. For short stays, most dogs don't play with toys; however, if they're on vacation for a week or more many do. We don't recommend sending out their favourite toys as some times they get damaged or lost.

Limit your pet's food so he doesn't get car sick on the way to the kennel. Having a bunch of special treats just before the car ride out and stay will only make him vomit. That's not a nice way to start a holiday.

Saying good-bye

If you cried and made a scene when you sent your child to school for their first day of kindergarten, they'd likely panic about going to school. Your dog will have the same reaction to kennelling if you make a big deal about it.

Kennels can be fun. Dogs like hanging out with other dogs. I repeat. Kennels can be fun. Dogs like hanging out with other dogs. If you panic and make your dog feel like it's bad, he'll think it's bad. If you think about it as being your dog's spa holiday, your dog will have a great time.

While you're away

Don't worry. Be happy. E-mail or call us to check up on your dog, then, have a great time.

Homecoming

Upon returning home, many dogs will run around the house to make sure it is as it was when they left. Some run around very fast.

Like when you brought him to the kennel in the first place, because he'll be excited, limit water and food for the first couple of hours so he doesn't take in too much and make himself sick.

It's normal for your dog to be sleepy when they return home. Most dogs sleep a lot when they're at home. When they come to the kennel, they spend a lot of time checking out what's going on – staying up late and being active. When they go home they're tired. Let him sleep off his holidays for a couple of days, then life will return to normal.

Many people comment that their dog is "better" after coming back from the kennel. One theory is that when a dog leaves their family – their pack – their status within the pack changes. When the dog returns, they try harder to impress their old pack members – that's you J

Louise Yates and her husband Dan operate [K-Lane Kennels](#) near Regina. She is a Certified Pet Care Technician and Pet First Aid Instructor.