

Pacific Animal Foundation

www.pacificanimal.org

PLANNING AHEAD...

Peace of Mind for Pet Guardians

By Lana Simon

We all feel more capable when we plan ahead for many of our work and home life commitments. When we are organized we feel less stressed and more able to handle unexpected changes. As a pet guardian we should include our four-footed companions in that planning equation as well.

When PAF adopts an animal into a new home, our adoption package includes a "continual care" form. We have a discussion about this form and how to plan for unexpected emergencies that may involve the well-being of the new pet. If a little forethought is put into this topic then, if an emergency happens, there is a structured safety net in place that can give the pet guardian peace of mind and the pet - "continual care" during this unexpected emergency time. A copy of our "Continual Care" form for cats is included with this article and our website has a form for dogs and rabbits as well. (www.pacificanimal.org)

Preparation ahead of time ensures peace of mind and a smooth transition for all.

CONTINUAL CARE PROVISIONS - CATS

Please take time to think about what would happen to your precious pet(s) if you become seriously ill or die unexpectedly. Please discuss your wishes with your next of kin and leave written instructions so others know your wishes. **You may want to make your wishes official and include them in your Will.

Will your immediate family automatically continue to keep your pet(s) ?
Will someone look after it (them) the way you would want ?

If you are not sure:

- have you made some provisions with other family members or a friend to look after your animal(s) immediately upon your illness or demise ? put them in boarding ?
- have you set aside a sum of money in your Will to pay for the cost of looking after your pet(s) for food, veterinary care, grooming and boarding during your illness or demise?
- do you want your pet(s) re-adopted to a new home ?

CAT FORM

Information for your care giver/s:

Date: _____

CAT:		TEMPORARY CAREGIVER:	
Name:		Name:	
Description:		Address:	
Age:	Male/Female:	Tel:	Cel:
Vet Records at:			
Phone No.			

My cat is fed: Once a day _____ Twice a day _____ Approx. time/s _____

Food my cat likes: _____
(brand names of food)

Litter my cat likes: _____

My cat is: Indoor only _____ Can go outdoors _____

My cat sleeps: In his basket _____ On the bed _____ Other: _____

Any special medical problems: _____

My next of kin is: _____ Phone No. _____

My Lawyer is: _____ Phone No. _____

For suggestions to find your pet a new home,
please visit www.pacificanimal.org

NAME AND SIGNATURE OF PET OWNER _____

As pet guardians we are all aware of those sudden health or accident emergencies that our pets can have without any warning. We advise adopters to begin a "rainy day" fund right away and start saving for those times when they are faced with one of those emergency situations and a trip to the veterinarian is necessary. Hopefully a bill will be minor but, if the illness or injury is more serious, then the bill could be hundreds of dollars and most veterinary hospitals require full payment at the time of treatment.

Some emergency situations happen to the caregiver and thought should be given to this potential situation as well so that the beloved pet is looked after properly during this time. Everyone should have a temporary, alternate caregiver lined up to immediately step in to provide pet care if the owner/guardian is indisposed. If you are the sole guardian of a pet, this is extremely important to put a plan in place for continuous care for your animal.

Several years ago PAF received a call from a young man who had suddenly taken ill and was in hospital for an urgent appendix operation. His dog was at home and he had no back-up plan for the dog's care. He was advised he would be in hospital for a 7 - 10 day recovery period. If you suddenly couldn't get home, who would take your dog out for a bathroom break within a few hours? A wise idea would be to discuss an arrangement with a close friend, relative or neighbour whom you trust and make a commitment with them to act as an immediate, temporary guardian for your pet. This arrangement might be a reciprocal one so that a comforting system is in place. If you give written instructions on what foods/brands your pet likes, the pet's routine and any special medication the pet is given then there is a smooth transition for both the temporary caregiver and the pet. Details such as the name of the pet's veterinarian and whether the pet stays in its own home or lives with the caregiver can also be discussed and perhaps house keys exchanged so only a phone call puts a plan into action.

Plans should also be discussed with family members in case of the sudden passing of a pet guardian. What provisions have you made for your dear companion? Have you discussed with family whether a member would take over pet responsibilities or should the pet be re-homed? Would you want to set aside funds in your Last Will and Testament to cover care for your pet if a family member adopts it or if the pet is re-homed? Many months might be needed to find a new home and, in the interim, funds will be needed for pet food, veterinary care, cat litter, grooming expenses, possible boarding and/or doggie daycare. These details should be written so that there is clear direction for the care of your pet.

Don't wait until an emergency happens. Scrambling to find a reliable caregiver will just add to an already stressful emergency. Hopefully, your action plan will not be needed but you will have comfort and security knowing it's there.