

## Renter's Checklist for Cat Owners

**Learn how to find a cat-friendly rental and settle in with your cat.**

*By Anne B. McDonnell*

Finding a new place to rent can be time-consuming and stressful. This is especially true if you are moving with cats, since many rental properties don't accept pets. The good news is that help is out there. Pet organizations and rental websites offer pet-friendly rental listings, and many sites feature suggestions about moving with your cat. Below are 10 tips for moving with your cat.

1. When looking for a new place, start as early as possible. Finding a rental that accepts cats often can be more difficult than finding one that doesn't. Check many resources, including rental websites and your local humane society or animal shelter.
2. Create a pet resume with references from previous rental managers, and obtain a letter from your veterinarian that verifies that your cats' vaccinations are current, says Alex Dobrow, founder of PeopleWithPets, an online directory of pet-friendly housing and hotels.
3. Before signing a lease, check to make sure it specifically states that you are allowed to have a cat (or cats), says Nancy Peterson, issues specialist with The Humane Society of the United States. Also, clarify all extra deposits and monthly charges.
4. Prior to moving in, perform a pre-move-in damage inspection, and ask the rental manager to sign it, advises Tammy Kotula, public relations and promotions manager for Apartments.com. This way, you won't be charged for pre-existing conditions. Also, define what "damages" means, and get this in writing.
5. On moving day, keep your cat in a separate room, along with her toys, bed, food, water and litterbox, suggests Candice Eley, spokesperson for the San Diego Humane Society and SPCA. If you have help moving, put a sign on the door warning people not to open it.
6. During the car ride, keep your cat in a carrier, which she should be comfortable with by moving day.
7. Once in the new rental, keep your cat in a quiet room with her basic necessities, and allow time for your cat to feel comfortable there. Let her out to gradually explore, opening one new room at a time.
8. In your new rental, make sure all screens are secure, and be careful of cords on curtains or blinds, and wires that might look like playthings to a cat.
9. Keep your cat's old litterbox, scratching post, toys and bed, and don't change litter or food brands abruptly. Eley suggests purchasing a tall cat tree or window seat to "provide your cat a safe place to hang out and survey her new territory."
10. Outfit your cat with proper identification, including your cell phone number (especially if you haven't established a new home phone number yet). Also, have your cat microchipped, if you haven't already.

Following these tips will help you find the right place for you and your cat.

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