



Free Phone Service Connects Travelers to Nearest ER Vet Clinic

Through Labor Day, and possibly beyond, cat owners can call to find an emergency vet clinic during their travels.

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The emergency vet clinic service is complemented by a "Traveling with your Pet" checklist, available online.

After Hours Assurance, a service of Atlanta-based On Call Solutions, has partnered with HealthyPet Magazine to provide a free phone service that connects travelers with the nearest emergency veterinary clinic.

Traveling cat or dog owners who call (800) 204-4595 and provide the zip code, or city and state, of their current location will receive contact information for local veterinary clinics offering emergency services.

The nationwide service is available free of charge from Aug. 1 through Labor Day (Sept. 6), peak travel dates, according to Derrick Pittman, chief operating officer of On Call Solutions. Although they are considering extending the service beyond these dates for paying customers, he said.

Brad Carmichael, DVM, chief executive officer of On Call Solutions, said "Emergency preparedness, which includes knowing how to locate a clinic if immediate medical attention is needed, is key to planning travel with a cat or dog. Being in unfamiliar places can lead to emergency situations where minutes can be the difference between life and death. It's important that travelers have access to help if they require it."

Dr. Carmichael is also the owner of Pleasant Valley Veterinary Clinic in McMurray, Pa.

A "Traveling with your Pet Checklist," which includes a wallet-sized reference card with the toll-free phone number, has been developed to complement the service. The checklist includes items to bring when you travel with a cat or dog, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) and a flashlight, and a list of things to do before leaving, such as verifying that all vaccinations are current.

After Hours Assurance was created by On Call Solutions to enable veterinarians to provide fee-based consultations to pet owners needing immediate health advice for their animal when the clinic is closed.

HealthyPet Magazine is part of HealthyPet, a privately owned company that aims to help veterinarians strengthen client relationships via a suite of communication, education and data analysis tools.