



Pets and foreclosed homes

Frequently asked questions

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Frequently asked questions about pets and foreclosed homes

Q: How are animals being affected by the mortgage crisis and foreclosures?

A: An increasing number of media reports describe pets found in homes that have been vacated due to foreclosure. Sometimes these pets have been abandoned, but are otherwise healthy; other times, these pets have been found ill, dying or dead.

Many people who can no longer afford to pay their mortgage and lose their homes as a result will go to live with other family members, move into temporary housing or shelters, or opt for lower-priced housing. Unfortunately, their pets are not always welcome in these places.

In addition to pets found abandoned in empty homes, others have been set loose to roam, or dropped off without identification on veterinary clinic or animal shelter doorsteps. Our country already had millions of unwanted pets in foster homes, shelters, and animal control facilities before the mortgage crisis; now things have gone from bad to worse as we face a new epidemic of unwanted animals.

Q: If I leave my pet in the house, won't somebody take care of it?

A: You cannot assume that someone will find your pet and take care of it if you leave it behind in your foreclosed home. Agents for the foreclosure company may not enter the home for days to weeks after it has been vacated. By then, it may be too late to help your pet(s). Even if you leave food and water for your pet(s), it will probably not be enough to sustain it for a sufficient period of time.

Dogs left in homes may attempt to protect their territory when strangers enter the home. Protective behavior and associated aggression can make it difficult for foreclosure company agents to capture a dog, and animal control officers may be called in to do so. If your dog exhibits aggression in the presence of those who are likely to rehome it, it is less likely that it will find a new, loving home. Cats may hide when strangers enter the house, reducing their chance of being found.

Pets play important roles in our lives, and we understand how difficult it can be to be forced to give up your pet when you've lost your home. If you can't take your pet with you, please find it a new home instead of leaving it behind in an abandoned house. Pets deserve our love and attention. When we get a pet we assume the responsibility of ensuring it always has a caring, permanent home.

Q: What are my options if I can't take my pet with me when I vacate my foreclosed house?

A: If you've already learned that you can't take your pet with you to your new home, you have several options. If you know your situation is temporary, you may be able to find someone who can provide a foster home for your pet(s) until you can reclaim them. If you must permanently give up your pets, you will obviously want to find permanent, loving homes for them.

- Try to find someone to foster or adopt your pet(s). Check with your family, neighbors, friends, and coworkers.
- Contact local rescue organizations to see if they can help you find a home. If you have a purebred dog, go to <http://www.akc.org/breeds/rescue.cfm> to find a rescue organization devoted to your dog's breed. Listings of purebred cat rescues are available at <http://purebredcats.org/>.
- Advertise your adoptable pet(s) in a pet-specific classified ad listing (see some resources below). Screen potential adopters as carefully as possible to ensure that your pet ends up in a quality home.
- Your veterinarian may also be able to help you identify a foster home or find a new home for your pet. Do NOT, however, leave your pet on the veterinary clinic's doorstep!
- Contact your local animal shelter or animal control facility to see whether it will accept your pet and assist in finding it a new home if you are unable to find a home for it yourself.

Q: Why can't I just leave my pet on my veterinary clinic's doorstep?

A: There are several reasons why you shouldn't do this. First of all, your pet might escape its container before it is found, and become lost, injured, or worse. Second, your pet will likely be scared, and may behave aggressively toward anyone who opens the container—it might injure someone, be hurt itself, or be less likely to find a new home because it appeared to be aggressive. Third, weather conditions (e.g., cold or hot weather) may adversely affect your pet and result in it becoming ill before it is found. Fourth, unless your pet has a collar, microchip, or other identification, your veterinarian may not immediately recognize your pet. If he/she does not recognize your pet, he/she will not be able to connect it with its medical and behavioral history, and it may be harder to find the pet a new home.

Q: But if I take my pet to a shelter, how will I know it won't be put to sleep?

A: Unfortunately, there are no guarantees that your pet will not be euthanatized if you take it to an animal shelter or animal control facility. Sometimes animal shelters are left with no other choice because there are so many unwanted animals and only limited resources to care for them. However, your pet's chances of finding a new home are MUCH better in a shelter than if it's abandoned in an empty house and no one knows it's there. In addition, euthanasia administered at a shelter is much more humane than allowing a pet to starve to death in an abandoned home.

Q: What can I do to improve my pet's chances of being adopted into a loving home?

A: First and foremost, a healthy, well-trained, spayed or neutered, and obedient pet already has a leg up on getting a great home. Provide your pet's complete health record to its new owners or the animal shelter, so they know your pet's history. If your pet has been microchipped, provide the microchip number and database information so that your pet's registration can be transferred to its new owner.

Q: Where can I find resources to help me find a home for my pet?

A: There are many online resources available to help you find a new home for your pet, and we've posted a few of them below. We don't suggest one is any better than another, and we cannot guarantee the quality of the services provided, but we encourage you to thoroughly evaluate your options and seek help if you need to find a new home for your pet.

ASPCA find a shelter

http://www.aspca.org/site/PageServer?pagename=shelter_2k5_searchShelter

Pets911 local adoption centers

http://www.pets911.com/services/adoption/location_list.php

Petfinder.com

<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters.html>

free classified ads: <http://www.petfinder.com/classifieds/classifiedhop.html>

Petbond.com

<http://www.petbond.com/>

1-800-SAVE-A-PET

<http://www.1-800-save-a-pet.com/>

Best Friends network

<http://network.bestfriends.org/>

OR go to [http://network.bestfriends.org/***\(Replace the asterisks with your state name\)](http://network.bestfriends.org/***(Replace the asterisks with your state name))

Q: My home hasn't been foreclosed, but I want to help. Can I?

A: If you're considering getting a pet, one of the best ways you can help is to adopt your new pet from a local rescue group or animal shelter and give it a loving, responsible and permanent home. Alternatively, you can help by fostering animals in need of temporary homes. If you already have a pet (or pets), or if owning a pet isn't right for you, consider donating money, time, and/or supplies to a local rescue group or animal shelter.

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