

Finding the Right Dog sitter for a Retired Dog

One of the beauties of having a service dog is that your dog gets to go everywhere with you. That all changed when my service dog, Morgan, had to be retired. All of a sudden, I had to travel for work with my new service dog, Whistle, and Morgan was stuck at home with the cats.

If you have a retired service dog, or any type of older dog, they might have health issues and need someone to let them out regularly for toileting. Medical issues might also require someone who will monitor the dog's wellness.

This means a quest to find a dogsitter who can provide the care and companionship required. To start your search, you might:

- Ask friends for referrals
- Check the bulletin board at your vet's office

Once you've narrowed down the list of possibilities you can conduct phone interviews. Discuss each candidate's experience and credentials. Then invite the top candidates for an in-person interview with you and your older dog.

During the interview, you can review a list of your dog's:

- Daily routine
- Feeding
- Medications

Ask a variety of questions including:

- Do they have a reliable vehicle that they could use to take your dog to the vet if necessary?
- Will they be spending each night in your home to care for your dog?
- Will they be able to take your dog for a short walk each day?
- Can they understand your dog's feeding and medication instructions? And, will they be able to prepare his or her meals and maintain their daily routine?
- How have they handled emergency situations in the past? What types of situations have they responded to with other clients?
- Are they aware of your local Emergency Vet?

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- Will they be dogsitting for any other clients while you are away?
- Do they have any animals of their own? And, if so, who will be caring for them while they are dogsitting for you?

The candidate that I eventually selected was very engaged. She actually had me complete an application and she interviewed me as intensely as I was interviewing her. I really appreciated her organization and seriousness regarding her dogsitting duties. Based on her questions, it was clear that she was experienced and passionate about the animals that were left in her care.

When it came time for us to leave Morgan, I felt confident that the new dogsitter was up to the task and that he would be in good hands while we were away.

Marcie and Whistle 