



cal rentals

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renting with a pet

How skilled a negotiator are you? This advice may be more or less helpful, depending upon:
(1) how much you prepare in advance for your housing search with pets
(2) your ability to determine the amount of rapport you've established with a landlord (or a person offering a room)

Everyone loves a nice, fuzzy pet . . . everyone, that is, except people with allergies and many landlords. In the past, the rental market was not very pet-friendly, but in current times we have found the matter of pets to be much more negotiable. Here is our advice to students, staff, faculty and visitors who have a cat or a dog, and who are looking for rental housing:

First, you can custom-sort our rentals to find listings that indicate a dog or cat is allowed. However, most listings will indicate that no pets are wanted. What we have found is that **SOME** listers will waive their "no pet" policy if you can convince them that your pet is the most well-behaved pet in the world. How do you convince someone that your pet is the best critter on the planet?

It is usually helpful if you can make an appointment and establish a face-to-face rapport with the owner or manager (if you seek your own house or apartment) or the person offering the rental (if you seek a room for rent). Here is a sample of the sort of conversation you might have at the point at which you feel the lister might be inclined to rent to you:

"By the way, I notice you have a 'no pet' policy in your ad. I have a very well-behaved (dog/cat) with references, and I would be willing to pay an extra pet deposit (if the landlord isn't already charging the legal maximum). Would you consider waiving your pet policy in such a circumstance?"

A "letter of recommendation" from your former landlord about your pet can work wonders. This will speak volumes to a prospective landlord who might be swayed to let your pet live with you. If you are coming from a place where you have owned your own home, tell the landlord you understand the value of home ownership and have trained your pet not to cause any damage and you would treat the rental as your own home.

Bring a PHOTO of your pet, not the pet itself, unless otherwise requested by the landlord. Anything you can say to demonstrate that your pet is well behaved also helps. If your cat is declawed, or if your dog has had training, use that information to your advantage when talking about your pet.

Tell the landlord you will follow any "pet rules" established. For example, you will always pick up after your dog to keep the yard clean. (It also makes you a good neighbor — and it is the law in many communities — to clean up after your dog on its daily walks.)

Not every landlord will go for it. Some have had such bad experiences with pets in the past that they are not willing to consider any pet under any circumstances.

A SPECIAL NOTE TO CUSTOMERS WITH DOGS: Some landlords are extremely cautious about renting to anyone with a pitbull or a pitbull-appearing dog. Some insurance carriers are refusing to insure rentals in which tenants have a pitbull. If you have this breed, or a dog that appears to be a pitbull, you may have difficulty securing housing. Make every effort to follow the guidelines given above.