

Roxborough Law Office LLP

Pet Planning Protecting our non-human friends

We take good care of our pets - we live with them, we feed them well, we play with them, we take them for medical care, we have them “chipped” and tagged, we love them and they love us.

Have you considered who would take care of your beloved companions when you die or if you become disabled?

Especially if you live alone, there are certain precautions you can take. Let's look at a few scenarios:

- (1) **Question:** Your dog (or cat or bird) is at home. You are out on an errand and something happens - you are in a car accident, you have a heart attack - how would your pet be cared for?

Answer: Keep a card in your wallet with the names, identification and location of your pets and the name and phone number of someone to call who can help out and get access into your home.

- (2) **Question:** You are hospitalized for a period of time and cannot return to your home, or you come home from a medical treatment and cannot care for your pets, who will take care of them?

Answer: Your Power of Attorney document, prepared by a lawyer, can include a provision for the temporary care of your pet while you are disabled. You can name an “Agent”, a friend, relative, or neighbor, to provide attention to your pet, under your instructions and with your permission, until you are well again and can do it yourself.

- (3) **Question:** What happens to my dog, or cat, or other pet when I die?

Answer: Because your pet is not a person, you cannot leave money or property directly to him or her in your Will. The law views your pet as “property”. We know your pet is much more special than a piece of furniture, so for the purposes of Estate Planning, let's think about your pet as a very complicated piece of property, like your house, that requires care and maintenance. Someone must be willing and able to provide daily care. In your Will, you can bequeath your pet to a person or persons, who you trust, or to a reputable shelter, to provide care at the level you specify. Typically, you also give this beneficiary a gift of money to cover those costs over the expected lifetime of your pet.

Please call our office for an appointment to review and revise your Estate Planning documents to include your beloved companions.

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