



PLANNING FOR YOUR ANIMAL COMPANIONS

Ensure their well-being in the event that you can no longer care for them



PETAINDIA

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Our animal companions are important members of our families, and we know how much they depend on us. That's why it's crucial that we make detailed preparations for their future care in the event that we're no longer able to care for them ourselves.

There are steps that you can take to ensure that your animal companions receive the loving care that they are accustomed to and to make any transition for them as stress-free as possible.



Short-Term Care: Have an Emergency Plan

It's essential that you arrange for someone to come to your home at short notice to visit your animals in the event of an emergency. The person you choose will need to be able to provide them with food and fresh water, console them, and take care of all their other needs until their long-term care has been arranged. Many people select a family member or a close neighbour who has a key to their home and is already familiar with their animal companions.

Long-Term Permanent Care: Finding Guardians You Trust

The process of ensuring that your animals' quality of life is maintained is filled with difficult but important choices. Now is the time to make plans to protect your animals and ensure their care in the event that they outlive you or if you become unable to care for them.

Your animals thrive on your personal attention and love – they share your home and routines. It's crucial, therefore, that you make arrangements for their permanent care to ensure that they will be safe, comfortable, and happy.

For many people, selecting permanent guardians for their animal companions is the most difficult aspect of estate planning. It's a good idea to name at least two candidates for each animal in case your first choice is not able or willing to take responsibility for your animals when the need arises. Everyone's situation is different, but one of the key factors in selecting guardians is trust. Choose people you trust to carry out your wishes.

If you have more than one animal companion, consider whether you should require that your animals be placed together. For animals who have bonded, it can be devastating to lose not only you but their animal friends as well. Even animals who don't seem to get along may end up taking comfort in each other's presence.

Another key factor is whether your animals will like and bond with the guardians you have chosen. Ensuring that they'll be comfortable with their new families will help make their transitions as smooth as possible.



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Once you have selected prospective guardians, discuss your expectations with them – including your animals’ needs. They must be comfortable with undertaking the responsibilities involved – and because they’ll have full control of your animals’ lives, you must be confident that they’ll always act in your animals’ best interests. It’s important for you to stay in close contact with your selected guardians in order to ensure that they remain fully informed of your current expectations and vice versa, especially if circumstances change.

You should also maintain a list of your animals’ selected permanent guardians and give it to your solicitor or the executor of your estate.

If you are unable to find someone you trust to be your animals’ permanent guardian, you might like to consider asking a local rescue centre to care for them while good homes are being found. Make sure you check the organisation out personally, as some shelters have a higher standard of care than others.





Vital Information Files and Cards

It's important to keep files with current information about each of your animals and the arrangements you've made for their care. This information should also be given to the animals' temporary carers and permanent guardians. You can use PETA India's "Emergency Animal Care Instructions" form, which is included in your pack.

At a minimum, keep a current list of people who should be contacted in the event of an emergency, along with the following:

- The name, date or year of birth, and sex of each animal
- The name, address, and telephone number of their veterinarian
- Their diets, eating habits, and feeding schedules
- A picture or two of each animal
- Insights into their behaviour: likes and dislikes, personalities, etc
- A description of their current lifestyle (Do they spend time in your garden? Do they often travel in your car with you? Where do they sleep? What are their favourite toys?)
- A list of priorities that should be considered if it becomes necessary to find them a new home
- Details of any medications they need
- Details of any pet insurance or microchip documents

Revisit this information at least twice a year in order to keep it as accurate as possible, and be sure to inform your temporary carers and permanent guardians of any changes. Keep critical contact information, along with a note indicating the location of the more detailed files, in your purse or wallet. (See PETA India's wallet alert card.) In a highly visible location in your home, you should also place a sign indicating how many animal companions you have, and put your emergency sticker (included in your pack) in a window near your front door.





Formalising Your Plans

Once you have selected carers and guardians, we suggest that you complete your plans in consultation with your solicitor, who will be able to advise you on a variety of options – including trusts and conditional bequests.

You may want to ask your solicitor to word your legal documents in a way that limits the powers or increases the responsibility of your chosen carers and guardians. The following are some examples of clauses that you may want to include:

- Ensure that your animals will never be tested on, used for research of any kind, or commercially exploited.
- Require your chosen carer to visit and carefully inspect any prospective new home before relinquishing custody of your animals.
- Require the carer to request a fee from a potential new guardian or take other steps to ensure that whoever is seeking custody of the animals is not attempting to acquire them deceptively with the ultimate goal of selling them to others who might exploit and harm them.
- Require that euthanasia be performed, if and when necessary, by a licensed veterinarian or an animal shelter worker only.
- Require that each animal be seen by a veterinarian at least once a year.
- State any other stipulations clearly and succinctly in order to ensure that your animal companions continue to enjoy the life you want them to have.



Special Considerations

There are some animals who require particularly careful planning because of their perceived commercial value, their age, or other factors.

- **Animals with commercial value:** Horses, cattle, sheep, and many other species retain commercial value after their deaths. This increases the likelihood that unprincipled people will try to acquire them deceptively or harm them for personal gain. Be sure to stipulate in your will or trust that under no circumstances are your animals to be used commercially or sold for commercial use in the future – whether they’re alive or dead.

- **Animals with a long life expectancy:** It’s also important to consider your animals’ life expectancies when making your plans. Turtles, horses, exotic birds, and many other animals can live for 50 years or more. Many potential guardians will be unable to make a lifetime commitment to such animals. Choose guardians with care in order to minimise the chance that they will be shuffled from person to person or fall into the wrong hands.

Some animals may be happiest in a sanctuary – especially those who thrive on contact with members of their own species, such as pigs, sheep, cows, and birds. Just be sure that your animal companions get the love and care that they deserve. You must visit any sanctuaries that you are considering and carefully evaluate the quality of life of the animals who live there.

These are difficult but important choices. Now is the time to make these decisions in order to protect your animals and provide for their care in the event that they outlive you.





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Giving Animals a Future

As you make your plans to secure care for your animal companions, it's also a good time to make sure that all of your documents, including your will, are up to date.

When you create or update your plans, after you've provided for your loved ones, we hope you'll consider leaving a gift to PETA India in your will that will help animals for generations to come. Legacy gifts are vital to continuing our life-changing work – and large or small, every single gift moves us a step closer to a kinder world for all animals.

For information on leaving a gift to PETA India in your will, please contact us at Legacies@petaindia.org or on 022 40727382.

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