



## Preventing “Surrenders”

*Approximately 1/3 of the animals entering shelters are there because they have been surrendered by their guardians. When an animal is surrendered to a shelter, he is instantly at risk: he has lost his home, his security, his safety, and he may ultimately lose his life. Here is some information about the common causes of surrender, and how they can be prevented.*

- 1)** There are many reasons people feel they must surrender their animals. If you can find a solution to whatever problem you are experiencing, that means one less animal in the shelter system competing for a new home. Before surrendering, please try to do everything possible resolve the problem first, and surrender the animal only as a last resort.
- 2)** Studies show that 90% of surrendered dogs have had no training. When you bring a dog into your family, be sure to take him to a training class. He'll learn good manners, you'll get to know each other more deeply, and it will help prevent future behavior problems. If you do experience behavior a problem, call your local shelter or veterinarian for a referral to a behaviorist or trainer. Many, many behavior problems are quite easy to solve with the right knowledge and understanding. (This is true for cats too!)
- 3)** It may sound simple, but make your animal companion part of the family and include him in your activities. The result will be a happier, more content animal who fits in better and has a stronger bond to you and your family.
- 4)** Some people feel that they don't have enough time for their animal companion. One way to address this is to try to increase the quality of the time you can give, by doing your animal's favorite thing, even if for a short time: if you only have a half hour, take your dog for a walk; if you only have 15 minutes, brush your cat. Another way to address the time issue is by increasing the quantity of time you spend, by simply including your animal in the time you are doing other things - for instance, how about talking to him while you're folding the laundry? Or petting him while you watch TV?
- 5)** Shedding and flea issues are common reasons for surrendering animals. Just as you yourself need grooming, your companion animal needs some basic grooming too. Shedding will be greatly reduced by regular brushing to collect the hair before it gets everywhere. There are literally dozens of ways of dealing with fleas; see [www.HSUS.org/Pets/pet\\_care](http://www.HSUS.org/Pets/pet_care) and click on “What you should know about flea and tick products” for ideas.
- 6)** If your animal has health problems, a little dedication may be required to make him well again. Yes, it can sometimes be expensive. Financial aid may be available from local shelters or other community animal groups, and you can talk to your veterinarian about a payment plan. Ultimately, your willingness to provide the needed care is your “payment” for the living being who gives you so much unconditional love and devotion in return.
- 7)** If someone in the house is allergic to the animal, talk to your doctor about possible treatments - in many situations, allergies can be controlled. It will help to keep your animal clean and groomed, and keeping your living quarters clean will also help - check into vacuum cleaners with the special HEPA filters, and use them often. Allergies can also be mitigated with a little separation, such as not allowing the pet into the allergic person's bedroom. The Humane Society of the United States has more ideas: go to [www.HSUS.org/Pets/pet\\_care](http://www.HSUS.org/Pets/pet_care) - click on “Allergies to Pets.”

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*Everyone can help end America's homeless animal tragedy*



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- 8)** "Moving" and "landlord won't allow" are among the top reasons given by guardians when relinquishing their dogs or cats to animal shelters. This can be a challenging issue, but there are steps you can take to increase your chances of finding pet-friendly rental housing: having references from past landlords, providing an "animal resume" highlighting your animal's good behavior and your responsible care, offering an additional security deposit. The Humane Society of the United States has an excellent guide with more detail, at [www.HSUS.org/pets/pet\\_care](http://www.HSUS.org/pets/pet_care), click on "Renting with Pets."
- 9)** Plan for the unexpected. Have a plan in place that will include your companion in case of a disaster or personal emergency. See our Tip Sheet, "When You Have an Emergency: Providing for your animals and ensuring their long-term care" for more information.
- 10)** Make a lifetime commitment. Living with an animal will inevitably be inconvenient at some point, but our companions deserve a lifetime of loving, responsible care in return for the love, devotion, and trust they share so willingly with us.. They are living beings whose very lives depend on the decisions we make and the actions we take, so please, act with commitment, perseverance, and love. reclaimed, you will also cry. Each profile comes with a lesson still to be learned... Leigh and Geyer believe that, with a strong course of community education, the death rolls at animal shelters can, some day, reach zero. Their book is a step toward that magical number."

### RESOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION ON PREVENTING SURRENDERS

[www.wonderpuppy.net/canwehelp](http://www.wonderpuppy.net/canwehelp)

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