

## Plan Ahead for Your Pets when you can no longer care for them

We've been conditioned to think about making arrangements for any children still young enough to need care and possibly for other family members as well. But most of us haven't given a moment's thought to what would happen to our pets if something should happen to us. And yet, our pets are counting on us to do so.

Hard to think about? You bet it is! But life is uncertain, and although we prefer not to think of the "what ifs," We know it's our responsibility to the pets we love to be certain they're in good hands if something happens.

It's a sobering thought, but do you know who will take care of your pets if you should die or be so incapacitated that you can no longer care for them? Many people assume that family members will keep their pets, but shelter volunteers see numerous pets surrendered because of the owner's death. Whether your death turns out to be unexpected or not, planning for your pets' care can give you peace of mind.

## How can you ensure that your pets will be well cared for if something happens to you?

While you should formalize any arrangements with the help of a solicitor, it's essential to discuss your plans with the person you've chosen to handle your affairs, and with anyone you hope will adopt your pet(s). You might assume a friend or family member will adopt your pet, but that same person, no matter how well-meaning, may not be prepared for the responsibility. Sadly, it's not as simple as stating in a will "I want my dogs to be taken care of," or "the cats should go to my niece, Katie." What if Katie doesn't want them, or is undergoing unseen financial misfortune when the time for transfer arrives? Make sure you name alternates. If something happens to your first choice of pet guardian, specify a back-up. The time to find this out is now, so you can make other arrangements.

If you have more than one pet, you may need to make a separate arrangement for each one. Before any of this happens, you should ask a person you trust to determine if the animals are young and healthy enough to make the adjustment. Any pet that isn't should be euthanased. While we all hate the idea of a loved pet being put down you should think about what is best for your pet, particularly an older cat; would it settle into a new home? Is it in good health? Does it have the temperament to make a good house pet for someone else? If the cat is not going to live a happy life, think about the fact that it may be better off if it is euthanased and spared the stress of readjustment.

Whatever arrangements you make for your pets, and whether you decide to spell everything out in a legal document, you should make your wishes known to family and friends.

Do not expect anyone to be able to identify your cats as easily as you can. We cannot stress enough the importance of having an identification system in place, do not rely on friends or family. All cats should be microchipped for ease of identification, take a photo and put it in an easily found file along with its vaccination certificate, pedigree if it has one, microchip information, description of what it looks like, likes to eat and its personality and anything else you can think of.

Remember to leave money to cover the cost of caring for your pets for a prolonged period of time. When you're calculating how much to leave for pet care; take into account the average life expectancy of your pet. Remember that as a pet ages it is more likely to need veterinary care and medicine. "Overfunding it is better than underfunding,"

Make sure a neighbour knows you have pets and can get into your house to feed them (or know who to contact) if you're taken off in an ambulance.

On your mobile phone, type ICE (in case of emergency) or "emergency" in front of one or two emergency contacts. That emergency contact, too, should have keys to your house, instructions for pet feeding and care, and the name and number of your veterinarian. Being prepared for the worst, or at least the inevitable, can ease some of the concern at that time when everyone is upset and no one is sure what to do. Outlining exactly what you want to happen makes a big difference.

There are several very useful web sites which go into more details and give good suggestions and while some of them are American based there is good basic information on them particularly : -

<http://www.cfainc.org/client/whoswho.aspx>

[www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org)

[http://seattletimes.com/html/homegarden/2016882412\\_petswills28.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/homegarden/2016882412_petswills28.html)

<http://www.petfinder.com/after-pet-adoption/providing-pets-future.html>

FCCQ Inc. can arrange for you to fill in a statutory declaration which can be witnessed and held by the

FCCQ registrar to be actioned on your demise or severe incapacity. A copy of which is below.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss your program before formally submitting the form, please feel free to contact: Hon. Registrar, Ros Bird — phone: (07) 3200 0446; email: registrar@fccqinc.org.au

Please mail completed form to The FCCQ Honorary Registrar; PO Box 1318, BROWNS PLAINS QLD 4118.

**Oaths Act 1867**

**Statutory Declaration**

**QUEENSLAND  
TO WIT**

I, **[insert full name]**, of **[insert address]**, in the State of Queensland do solemnly and sincerely declare that in the event of my death or severe incapacitation I give my authority for the transfer of my prefix and cats into the name(s) of and for the disposal of my cats as they see fit.

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With the following instructions

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Instruction for specific cats

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<b>Phone number (Home):</b>	
<b>Phone number (Business):</b>	
<b>Mobile Number:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Prefix(es):</b>	

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1867.

**[Signature of person making the declaration]**

Declarer

Taken and declared before me at **[insert name of town or city and suburb where affidavit signed]** this **[insert date]** day of **[insert month]** 20**[insert year]**, before me.

**[Signature]**

Justice of the Peace/Commissioner for Declarations

Ensure that you sign each page.