

Welcome mat out for four-legged friends

More people are looking for pet-friendly apartments, and landlords are responding.

By J.W. Elphinstone
The Associated Press

POSTED: 05/30/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

Apartment owners are animal lovers these days.

[Apartments.com](#) reported more landlords have loosened their pet policies over the past 18 months. The online apartment-listing firm says landlords are responding to the spike in demand from renters searching for pet-friendly digs.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some renters are homeowners displaced by foreclosures who have taken their pets with them, while others are longtime renters with pets looking to upgrade during a soft market.

Job losses and pay cuts also have forced more renters to double up and roommates to share space with a four-legged roommate.



While more landlords are allowing pets, policies and deposits vary. Renters are advised to read the fine print and make sure their critters are well-behaved. (Diane Bondareff, The Associated Press)

"This can pose additional challenges for pet owners who are renting," said Peggy Abkemeier, [Rent.com](#)'s general manager. Renters should read pet policies closely and be ready to pony up more money for Fido or Whiskers. And if roommates are in the picture, renters should be ready to smooth over any pet introductions.

Here are some tips to keep your landlord and roommate happy with your pet.

- **Get permission:** If you already have a lease in place, but want to add a furry companion, pass it by your landlord first. Some properties have strict "no pets allowed" policies.
- **Do a targeted search:** If you're looking for a new place with your pet, narrow your search using online apartment search sites. Typically, you can check off which kind of place you're looking for on the search form.
- **Read the fine print:** Make sure to read your lease and understand the pet policy. Some pet deposits will cover damages while others won't.
- **Open your wallet:** Apartment.com estimates that more than half of renters pay more than \$500 for a pet deposit. But that widely varies.
- **Be a good neighbor:** "Dogs can talk to each other through the walls. So if you can't muzzle your dog while you're at work, try obedience school to tame its barking, Abkemeier recommends.