



# THE PET-CARE

# SAFETY REALITY CHECK

**A 10-minute self-assessment for growing pet-sitting and dog-walking companies**

Your team works in real homes, real neighborhoods, real weather, real traffic, and real animal-behavior situations. This quick assessment will help you see where your company may already have strong safety habits - and where your systems may need to grow before a preventable incident forces the issue.

## OUTCOME

One of four readiness levels

A scorecard you can use today



**REAL HOMES**

Entry, exit, access



**REAL WEATHER**

Heat, ice, storms



**REAL PETS**

Behavior changes



**REAL SYSTEMS**

Controls, not luck

**Protecting people is part of protecting pets.**

Practical. OSHA-informed. Field-tested for mobile pet-care work.

# WELCOME

Start here before you score the assessment.

## A NOTE FROM BETH

If your business started with trust, experience, good judgment, and a deep love of animals, you are not alone. That is how many excellent pet-care companies begin.

But as your team grows, the work changes. More decisions happen when you are not standing there: at doors, on walks, in client homes, around reactive animals, during medication tasks, in bad weather, and between visits.

This Reality Check is not designed to scare you or shame you. It is simply a way to ask: Where are we protected by a real system, and where are we still relying on "be careful"?

### How to use this Reality Check

- 1 Read each statement and circle the score that best describes your current operation.
- 2 Add the section scores. The maximum total is 60.
- 3 Use the reflection page to choose one practical improvement instead of trying to fix everything at once.

### Scoring key

<b>0</b> Not in place	<b>1</b> Informal / inconsistent	<b>2</b> Somewhat in place	<b>3</b> Clearly in place and used consistently
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**Reminder:** This is a starting point, not a verdict. The goal is prevention, not blame.

# 20-QUESTION SAFETY REALITY CHECK

Hazard awareness and field decision-making.

Circle one score for each statement: 0 = not in place | 1 = informal | 2 = somewhat | 3 = clearly in place

SCORE 1 2 3

**SEC 1 HAZARD AWARENESS**

1.	We have a clear process for identifying high-risk pets, homes, routes, and service conditions before visits begin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Our intake process asks specific questions about bite history, reactivity, escape risk, medical needs, handling limits, and environmental hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Our team knows which hazards require extra review before service continues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	We treat near misses - bites that almost happened, doors that almost failed, dogs that almost slipped equipment - as useful safety information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SEC 2 FIELD DECISION-MAKING**

5.	Team members know when they are allowed to pause, modify, or stop a visit for safety reasons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	We have clear escalation steps when a sitter feels unsafe, uncertain, or pressured during a visit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Our team does not have to choose between "keep the client happy" and "stay safe."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	We have specific rules for high-risk situations such as reactive dogs, door-dashing pets, icy steps, severe heat, poor lighting, or medication resistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Subtotal reminder**  
 Section 1 total: \_\_\_\_\_ Section 2 total: \_\_\_\_\_

# 20-QUESTION SAFETY REALITY CHECK

Safeguards, training, communication, growth, and accountability.

Circle one score for each statement: 0 = not in place | 1 = informal | 2 = somewhat | 3 = clearly in place

SCORE 1 2 3

**SEC 3 SAFEGUARDS AND PROCEDURES**

9.	We have written procedures for entry/exit, leash transfers, medication tasks, severe weather, driving safety, emergency contacts, and incident reporting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Our safeguards do not depend entirely on the sitter remembering everything under pressure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	We have a reliable way to flag behavior, home, route, medication, or client-access concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	We review whether our current procedures actually work in real field conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SEC 4 TEAM TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION**

13.	Team members are trained on safety expectations before they handle higher-risk visits alone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	We verify that team members understand safety procedures, rather than only giving them documents to read.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Safety concerns are welcomed as operational information, not treated as complaining or weakness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	We regularly talk about field risk without making people feel blamed, dramatic, or incompetent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SEC 5 GROWTH, LEADERSHIP, AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

17.	Our safety systems have kept up with our business growth, staffing model, visit volume, and client complexity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	We know which safety responsibilities belong to the owner, manager, scheduler, team lead, and field team member.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	We can show how we respond to safety concerns, incidents, near misses, and recurring hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	We are not relying on luck, client memory, individual heroics, or "experienced sitters should know what to do" as our main safety strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Subtotal reminder**  
 Section 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Section 4: \_\_\_\_\_ Section 5: \_\_\_\_\_

# SCORE INTERPRETATION

Add the five section totals, then find your readiness level.

## Add your score

SECTION	MAX	YOUR SCORE
1. Hazard Awareness	12	_____
2. Field Decision-Making	12	_____
3. Safeguards and Procedures	12	_____
4. Team Training and Communication	12	_____
5. Growth, Leadership, and Accountability	12	_____
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>60</b>	_____

## What your score means

0-20

**Safety Is Mostly Informal**

Your business may be relying heavily on trust, memory, experience, and good intentions. That does not mean you are careless. It means your company may have outgrown informal safety habits.

**Recommended next step:**  
Start with foundational safety expectations and the Pet Sitter Safety System.

21-35

**Safety Exists, But It May Be Inconsistent**

You likely have some good habits and policies, but they may not be applied consistently across sitters, clients, routes, or high-risk situations.

**Recommended next step:**  
Identify your top three recurring safety gaps.

36-48

**Your Foundation Is Developing**

You have meaningful safety structure in place. The next opportunity is to make sure your systems are field-tested, understood by the team, and strong enough for growth.

**Recommended next step:**  
Use Beyond the Bite or advisory support.

49-60

**Strong Safety Leadership Emerging**

You are already thinking like a safety leader. Your next step is refinement: auditing consistency, improving training, reviewing near misses, and strengthening controls before growth creates new exposure.

**Recommended next step:**  
Maintain momentum with periodic review.

# YOUR REALITY CHECK REFLECTION

Use this page to identify the pressure point without overloading the business.

## Circle the one that feels most true right now.

This helps name the real gap before you choose the next improvement.

- We have safety expectations, but they live mostly in my head.
- We have policies, but I am not sure they match real field conditions.
- My team is making too many safety decisions alone.
- We have grown faster than our systems.
- We are doing well, but I want stronger proof and consistency.

## Choose one foreseeable hazard

Start with the hazard that has the greatest potential to hurt a person, pet, client, or business. Do not start with the easiest item. Start with the one that matters most.

**Hazard or pressure point:**

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**Where does it show up? Pets, homes, routes, clients, weather, tasks:**

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**What are we relying on right now? Memory, luck, experience, client recall, or a real safeguard?**

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**One improvement we can make this week:**

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# WHAT TO DO NEXT

*A calm next step after the scorecard.*

**YOU DO NOT NEED TO FIX EVERYTHING AT ONCE.**

Start with one foreseeable hazard. Choose one improvement.

## Ask this question first

**Where are we relying on "be careful" instead of a real safeguard?**

Then choose one improvement. It might be a clearer pause/stop rule, a safer entry/exit protocol, a better behavior flag, a weather threshold, a medication escalation step, or a weekly review of near misses.

## Ready for help?

Field Notes helps growing pet-sitting and dog-walking companies build practical, OSHA-informed safety systems that protect both sides of the leash.

### Start here:

[Explore the Pet Sitter Safety System](#)

[Book a Safety Program Design Advisory consult](#)

[Read Field Notes for Pet Pros](#)

**REAL PET-CARE WORK. REAL OPERATIONAL RISK. PRACTICAL SAFETY SYSTEMS.**

Educational tool. Not legal advice. Adapt to your own operation and jurisdiction.