

HOUSECALL

CAT GROOMING THE PROS VS CONS

“Housecall” refers to a groomer who performs grooming services inside the client’s home. Many pet owners, especially cat owners, prefer this type of service in order to provide a low stress and familiar environment for the pet. For a groomer, the housecall business model can be a great way to become a business owner without a large monetary investment. Depending on the area and equipment purchases, a cat-exclusive housecall business can begin with a start up as low as \$1000-2500. While it may be a perfect option for some, not every groomer will enjoy housecall grooming appointments.

PRO - Without a large expense like a mobile grooming van or brick-and-mortar building, housecall grooming can be a low cost business to start and keep running.

CON - Expansion and income potential can be more limited with this business model. While it is possible to add a dispatcher or second groomer, the maximum number of cats groomed per day is lower than it is for a stationary groomer. Time spent setting up or breaking down also cuts into profits.

PRO - A solo housecall groomer has complete control over their schedule, which can change each day without having to stick to set business hours.

CON - Consistency goes out the window! Bathing space, grooming space, water pressure, etc. are different at each client’s house. Sometimes grooming is done in the laundry room, a bathroom, kitchen, even the living room. A housecall groomer has to be highly adaptable and feel comfortable in new environments every day.

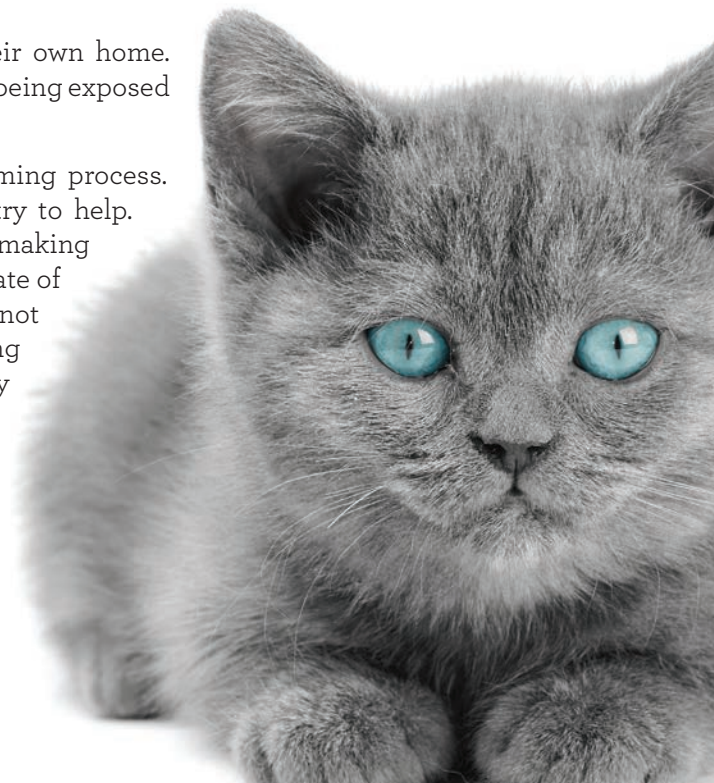
PRO - Grooming a smaller number of pets per day can be less stressful on the body. In addition, many housecall groomers impose a size limit or become feline-exclusive which cuts out large or unruly dogs from the schedule.

CON - With each appointment in a different place, groomers sometimes work in cramped, humid and uncomfortable situations. Also, all grooming equipment, tools and products must be brought in, set up, cleaned, broken down and then transported to each house. This can put a lot of strain on the body as well.

PRO - Many cats feel more comfortable being groomed in their own home. Housecall eliminates a trip in the car, new smells and sounds, and being exposed to any other pets.

CON - Pet owners are understandably curious about the grooming process. Many will want to watch the groom, ask questions, and even try to help. Some pets may be excited by the close proximity of their owners, making it harder to groom them safely. It is also important to be considerate of grooming techniques used while being watched as owners may not understand a pet’s reaction or how a technique works. Educating the client and answering any questions will help alleviate any concerns.

PRO/CON - Working within someone’s home creates a more laid-back environment and it is natural to develop friendly relationships with grooming clients and their pets. This is a “perk” to many groomers and clients. However, some groomers do not enjoy these more personal interactions, and it can be more difficult to establish clear boundaries. It is important to create and enforce business policies from initial contact.



BEING A HOUSECALL CAT GROOMER

Housecall cat groomers are a very special “breed” of groomer! They are confident, fearless and flexible. The CFMGs below have graciously provided tips, tricks and techniques they have found successful in their own business in this article and to many aspiring cat groomers. Also check out the “Housecall Grooming” section of Member Benefits online course, free to all current NCGIA members.

Having trouble accessing Member Benefits?
Contact the NCGIA office for registration.

Kelcie Brown, CFMG - Cats Only, LLC in Birmingham, Alabama

Follow Kelcie’s journey through cat grooming school and earning her CFMG in the “Diary of a Student” blog posts on the NCGIA website.

Elizabeth Farmer, CFMG - The Purrfect Cat Groomer, Inc. in Hollywood, Florida

Learn more from Elizabeth in the “House Call Cat Groomer” webinar in Member Benefits and featured in “Life as a CFMG” on the NCGIA website.

Deborah Hansen, CFMG - Kitty’s Purrfect Spa in Santa Clarita, California

Deborah shares tips and her housecall grooming bag in two “Danelle Drops In” videos.

Rachel Shute, CFMG - Feline Finesse in Merrillville, Indiana

Sally Staples, CFMG - West Coast Sassy Cats in Victoria, British Columbia

Read Sally’s “Making a Living Out of Love” in Member Benefits to find more housecall grooming insights.

Member Benefits has a “Housecall Cat Grooming” section with webinars, articles, videos and more featuring amazing CFMGs! Member Benefits is available to all current NCGIA members.

Join the conversation and ask questions in NCGIA’s Facebook groups!

NCGIA Groomer Survival Guide - For all groomers interested in cat grooming

NCGIA Members - Private group for current NCGIA members

CFMG Cat Chat - Private group for current CFMGs

HOUSECALL TIPS

Downsize and organize!

- Limit tools, equipment and products to necessities needed for each appointment. Ask clients to provide bulky items like towels, paper towels, or even a vacuum for clean up.
- Use refillable bottles for consumables, including shampoo(s), ear cleaner, disinfectant, etc.
- Research small, lightweight equipment, with bonus points if it can pull double-duty such as a small shopvac with ClipperVac attachments for comb cuts and deshedding treatments.
- Hiking or camping bags can contain lots of storage compartments while providing comfort and support during transport.

Safety First!

- For safety purposes, notify a friend or family member of your appointment schedule so someone always knows where you are. And always listen to your gut! If you are uncomfortable, leave immediately. Pepper spray or a small taser can be kept on your person for additional protection.

