

How to Find a Groomer Worthy of your Mini Schnauzer

Ideally, anyone who buys a Mini puppy would be able to return to the breeder on a regular basis for correct Schnauzer grooming....but that usually isn't possible. All too often, Mini Schnauzers leave the groomer's looking more like a Cocker Spaniel than a Mini. So how do you find a groomer who knows how to groom a Mini appropriately and who will follow all safety guidelines to ensure your dog is returned to you in the same good health that you left it?

Finding a Groomer:

Be advised that there is no government agency overseeing or licensing pet groomers. Some groomers may be certified by a grooming school or professional association, but anyone can stick a placard in the window.

So, where do you begin?

> Ask for Recommendations

- Ask your breeder who she recommends
- Get suggestions from friends, neighbors or your veterinarian
- Call a regional breed club and ask for member recommendations
- If you see an appropriately-groomed Mini walking down the street, ask the owner who her groomer is
- contact the National Dog Groomers Association of America

> Visit Grooming Facilities

Once you have a list of several recommendations, call each one and ask what services are provided as well as their prices and hours.

Most importantly, take a drive to visit your first & second choices. Ask for a quick tour of the facility. A reputable groomer shouldn't refuse a brief walk-through. Some things to notice:

- Is the facility clean and well-lit?
- Are there sufficient cages and are they size-appropriate?
- Are the drying cages located where they can be fully supervised at all times? (Dogs can die if left in hot drying cages too long.)
- Ask the staff a couple of questions—including how often they groom a MS — and see how knowledgeable they appear.
- Do they keep complete records—including any allergies & emergency contacts?
- A quick check with the Better Business Bureau by phone or online will tell you if any complaints have been lodged against the groomers.
- Ask each manager for two or three current clients to call for references. Ask especially for MS owners—if there are any.

>First Appointments

If the groomer has a waiting list for appointments, it's probably a good sign. If you can get in at any time, use some caution until you have been to several appointments. Don't just drop off your dog and leave. Stay and watch—even if the groomer discourages it. This is a safety factor. Or, you may choose to wait in the car and look in at odd moments, unannounced. Or, leave and return early. This is to check up on what is happening when you are not there.

Leave your cell phone number and a separate emergency contact. Write down any special needs—including skin or other health problems— and be sure it gets in your dog's file.

BE ADVISED: Groomers are not licensed to dispense tranquilizers. If your pet needs to be sedated for grooming, take him to a vet clinic with an on-staff groomer or attached grooming business.