



# Moving *with* Pets The Incredible Journey

BY BARBARA PATRICK

**M**OVING IS A STRESSFUL EXPERIENCE FOR A person, but changing homes can be even more distressing for our furry friends, who simply do not understand what is going on. There are ways, however, to ease the trauma.

I am fortunate to have a wonderful veterinarian, Carole Fulton, who makes house calls, so I rarely need to transport one of my pets. Her number one suggestion is to make sure the animal is properly contained.

When traveling by car, a dog should always be inside the vehicle.

“I’m horrified every time I see a dog in the back of a truck,” Fulton says. “If you have to stop suddenly, the dog will most likely be thrown from the truck and severely injured or even killed. If it’s not safe for your child, it isn’t safe for your dog.”

It is imperative that cats travel in a carrier. They are far more skittish than dogs and prone to react badly in a strange situation. Don’t make the mistake of letting



#### TIPS FOR PET PATRONS & THEIR OWNERS

- ✓ Call ahead to the hotel/campground or visit their website to confirm pet's stay and to find out any additional restrictions, fees, etc. Some locations have a one time fee while others are per day. Also, some hotels have size restrictions.
- ✓ Ask if the hotel has adequate green space for pet walking and bathroom usage. Some hotels that accept pets have only asphalt; making it difficult for animals to use the restroom.
- ✓ Plan ahead and get a list of emergency vets in the area.
- ✓ Always have your pets vaccinations current (i.e. rabies). Also, have health documents and any required state permits on hand should they be needed.
- ✓ Most states and some local municipalities have pet control and licensing ordinances. Be sure to check and register for this ahead of time to avoid fees/fines. This applies to most pets (exotic and domestic) with the only exception being tropical fish.
- ✓ During your stay or while moving designate one person to be responsible for the pet.
- ✓ Have a travel identification tag for all pets. The tag should include the pet's name, your name, destination address, and an alternate contact number.
- ✓ Travel with the appropriate size carrier and always utilize a leash.
- ✓ Pack the necessary supplies such as your pet's regular food, can opener, food and water dishes, blanket, favorite toy, treats, comb or brush, clean-up towel/newspapers, flea/tick repellent, a sedative if prescribed by veterinarian, scooper and plastic bags for proper clean-up, and deodorant spray.
- ✓ Notify management if you must leave your pet alone in the hotel room so maids aren't surprised when entering the room. It is also important for pet owners to be aware that they are responsible for any damage the pet causes.

the cat roam free in the car, a dangerous situation for both the animal and the driver.

“When they're frightened, cats completely forget any loyalty to you and are likely to bolt and be lost forever, so never ever take a cat out of the carrier until you are in a secure place,” Fulton says. “I knew a veterinary student who let a cat

out of its carrier to do its business, and the cat ran away. I can't stress this enough. That's why they call it a carrier. Use it.”

If you are traveling by car, keep to a regular feeding schedule. It is best to offer the main meal when you arrive at your destination or at the end of the day. Dry food is easiest to handle; also carry a jug or two of

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cold water. Try to stop every two to three hours to allow your dog to get a little exercise, and be sure to use a leash.

When traveling by car, ask your vet for medication if your pet is prone to carsickness. A first-aid kit and a travel tag that includes information such as your home address, phone number and destination are also helpful. Remember: Never leave your pet unattended in the car.

Air travel is more complicated, partly because each airline has its own rules, in addition to federal regulations in place to mitigate the stress on animals. It is wise to check with the airline well in advance, in case there are limitations on breeds or the size of animals. In addition, you probably will need a health certificate from your vet that has been issued within 10 days of travel.

Federal regulations are quite strict. Pets must be at least 8 weeks old and weaned for at least five days prior to the flight. The Federal Animal Welfare Act prohibits airlines from shipping animals if they cannot guarantee that pets will not be

exposed to temperatures less than 45 degrees Fahrenheit or more than 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Certain breeds are able to withstand colder temper-



atures for short periods; in this case, the regulation can be waived if your vet provides proper documentation. You should be aware that short-nosed dogs sometimes have more difficulty traveling by air. Cats and small dogs are permitted to fly in carry-on luggage that will fit under-

neath your seat; ask your airline if this is permissible.

A variety of travel items are available at your local pet store, including harnesses, leashes, travel food containers and carriers. If you are purchasing a carrier, be sure it is large enough to allow your pet to move freely. Your dog should be able to stand, sit erect, turn around and lie down comfortably. There should be a secure latch and a solid, leak-proof bottom with a pad, and it must be adequately ventilated. It is vital that you clearly label the crate with important information such as your name, address and phone numbers; the carrier should also be labeled "Live Animals" to assure proper handling.

For additional information on moving with your pet, talk to your veterinarian or visit the American Veterinary Medical Association's Web site at [www.AVMA.org](http://www.AVMA.org).

If you are flying, another helpful Web site is that of the International Air Transport Association: [http://www.IATA.org/whatwedo/cargo/live\\_animals/index.com](http://www.IATA.org/whatwedo/cargo/live_animals/index.com). 🐾

