

# HOW TO TRAVEL WITH YOUR PET

If you are planning a vacation and own a pet, you have a few decisions to make. Some dogs and cats are not suited for travel because of illness or physical impairment. They may not be able to withstand the rigors of travel no matter how carefully you plan the trip. If doubt exists regarding your pet's physical condition discuss the situation with your veterinarian.

If your dog or cat is not in good health or it becomes restless on trips, serious consideration should be given to boarding the animal with a friend or at a kennel. If your trip will be of short duration you might arrange for a responsible neighbor to dog sit or to regularly visit your home, feed your pet, and provide it with exercise. This latter idea may be preferred for the timid or elderly animal since the familiarity of home may provide needed security during your absence.

A clean well-run boarding kennel is another option to pet travel. Caution should be taken to select a facility which will provide quality care for your animal. Your personal veterinarian or local humane society can also assist in the selection of a reputable facility.

## Veterinary Examination

Prior to a trip your dog or cat should be examined by a veterinarian to assure it is in good health. A veterinary examination is also necessary to obtain the legal documents required for interstate and international travel. In addition to examining your animal, the veterinarian should provide any inoculations your pet requires such as rabies, distemper, infectious hepatitis, and leptospirosis. A veterinarian may prescribe a sedative or tranquilizer for the nervous pet traveler.

## Legal Requirements

Every dog or cat traveling across state lines should be accompanied by a valid health certificate and a certificate of rabies inoculation. While state health restrictions regarding pet travel are rarely enforced it is advisable to obtain the required documents and avoid the risk of having your pet placed in quarantine or refused entry into a state.

If you visit Canada your cat will be permitted to enter the country without any special documents if it is healthy. Dogs must be accompanied by a rabies certificate issued during previous 12 months. Also, a definitive description of the traveling dog is required.

Advance preparation is required for travel to Mexico. A health certificate, prepared in duplicate, should be mailed to the Mexican consulate with a \$4.00 fee. The certificate must include a description of your pet, the number of the rabies vaccine used, proof of distemper vaccine, and a veterinarian's statement verifying the animal is free from infectious or



contagious diseases. You may proceed with your trip when the certificate has been certified and returned.

Travel throughout the United States is unrestricted (with the proper documents) with the exception of Hawaii where there is an unwaiverable 120 day mandatory quarantine for all dogs and cats.

## Travel Carrier

The carrier which you select should be durable and smooth-edged with opaque sides and a grill door. The carrier should have several venting holes situated on four sides. Select a carrier which has enough room to permit your animal to sit or lie down. Be certain to choose a carrier with a secure door handle. Excellent pet carriers may be purchased from most domestic airlines.



### Preparation

Even if you do not anticipate any problems with your dog or cat it is wise to acclimate the animal to travel. Permit the animal to explore the carrier, place its food dish inside the carrier, and confine the animal to the carrier for brief periods. As a final step in the acclimation process confine the animal in the carrier and drive it around the neighborhood. If properly introduced to automobile travel most dogs and cats will quickly adjust to and even enjoy motorized outings.

When packing don't forget your pet's feeding and watering dishes, bedding, leash, collar, and first aid kit. A container of drinking water and a can of flea powder may also prove to be useful accessories. Be certain the animal wears a leather identification collar rather than a chain or choke type collar throughout the trip.

Keep feeding to a minimum during travel. Ice cubes or ice cream are better for the animal rather than consuming large amounts of water. A light meal can be provided a few hours before departure. It is also advisable to line the carrier with shredded newspaper or a towel.

### On The Road

Those animals which enjoy travel need not be confined if you have a restraining harness or are accompanied by a passenger who can hold the animal. Never permit your dog or cat to ride with its head protruding from the window. It could be injured by particles of debris or become ill from the cold air being forced into its lungs.

Stop frequently to allow your pet to exercise and to relieve itself. Never permit the animal out of the automobile unless it is on a leash.

Do not leave your animal in a parked car. The temperature rises quickly inside a locked car and your animal might become a victim of heat prostration. Moreover, an animal left alone in a car is an open invitation to pet thieves.

### TRAVEL BY AIRCRAFT

Dogs and cats can travel on aircraft in three ways:

1. As carry-on baggage accompanying you in the passenger section of the cabin. Some major carriers will permit one dog or cat to travel in each passenger compartment provided the animal will fit into a cardboard container small enough to be placed under the passenger seat. Containers are provided by the airline and usually measure not larger than 20" long x 15" wide x 8" high.

2. As excess baggage in the cargo compartment of your flight.

3. As air freight in the cargo compartment. This method of shipment is mandatory when the animal is to be unaccompanied.

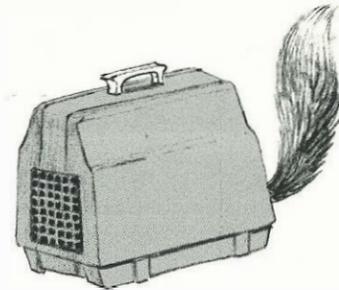
As soon as you have finalized your travel dates contact the carriers offering service along your route of travel and obtain information on their special pet accommodations. Make your pet's reservation well in advance. Those carriers permitting pets to travel as carry-on baggage limit the number of animals on any one flight. The airline also needs time to obtain a carrier for you in the event you do not already own a suitable travel kennel.

Place a tag on the outside of the carrier and on your pet's leather collar. The tag should contain the following information: the name and telephone number of the person who should be contacted in case of a problem, your pet's name, and your pet's destination.

If possible, avoid flight stopovers and aircraft changes. Such flight plans prolong your animals' trip. If your pet is traveling air freight, the risk of the animal being lost in transit will be increased with an indirect flight. If you must accept a flight plan which involves a change of aircraft be certain to consult the airline with regard to their policy on shipping animals through to destination points. Some airlines require animals being shipped as excess baggage to be reclaimed at the transfer airport and rechecked onto your connecting flight.

Attempt to select a flight time when the outside air temperature will not be uncomfortable for the animal. For example, don't ship a pet on a mid-day flight during the hot summer months. Most animals ventilate through their mouths so heat prostration may occur if a pet is exposed to the summer sun. Also avoid placing your pet on a flight during heavy periods of air traffic when take-offs and landings are likely to be delayed. It is especially important that the owners of short nosed dogs such as boxers and terriers exercise caution in selecting a flight time.

Plan to arrive at the air terminal at least



ninety minutes before your scheduled departure. This precaution will provide your pet with an opportunity to adjust to its surroundings. Be certain to walk dogs on a leash before entering the terminal building.

You may also request to speak with a member of the flight crew. Live cargo is not separately listed on the pilot's manifest. Therefore, he may be unaware he is transporting an animal unless you so inform him.

### TRAVEL BY SHIP

Many ship lines accept pets. Frequently they require pets to be confined in designated kennels. Some lines do permit pets in private cabins. The general guidelines suggested for other modes of travel will also suffice for planning ship voyages.

### TRAVEL BY RAIL

Most railroad companies permit animals to travel in the passenger compartment. However, Amtrak recently enacted a rule which requires pets to be confined in the baggage car and animals are not accepted for transport on trains not equipped with baggage cars. Generally, it is the passengers' responsibility to feed and exercise their pets at station stops. Train travel causes minimal stress to animals. Pets should be prepared to travel as outlined in other sections of this article.

### Hotel Accommodations

There are approximately 8,000 hotels, motels, and inns across the United States which accept guests with pets. Nationwide hotel chains which generally welcome pet travelers include Holiday Inns, Howard Johnson's, Quality Inns, Ramada Inns, Sheraton, Rodeway Inns, and Hilton Hotels. Individual hotels which accept pets are listed in *Touring With Towser* available from Gaines Dog Research Center, 250 North Street, White Plains, N.Y. 10625 for 50¢. In North Carolina state statutes prohibit admission of dogs to any hotel room used for sleeping purposes.

Hotel accommodations should be reserved in advance of your trip. Most of the hotels which accept pets are popular with travelers. Without a reservation your pet may literally be left out in the cold!

### Lost Pet

Even the most conscientious pet owner may be distracted for the brief moment an animal needs to stray. If your pet is missing immediately canvas the area. Should your animal not be located within several hours take the following action:

1. Contact the local animal control officer, or humane society.
2. Post signs at intersections and in store fronts throughout the area.
3. Provide a description of the missing pet to the police, milkman, and others with business routes in the area.
4. Advertise in a newspaper/radio station.

Be certain to list your hotel telephone number on all lost pet advertisements. A lost pet may become confused and wary of strangers. Therefore, it may be days or even weeks before the animal is apprehended by a good samaritan. If you must continue on your trip or return home make arrangements for the hotel clerk or shelter employee to contact you if your pet is located. There have been cases of animals being reunited with their owners six months to a year after they were lost.

### Responsible Pet Ownership

Many hotels, restaurants, and individual citizens will give your pet special consideration. It is important for pet owners to do their part to ensure that dogs and cats will continue to be welcomed as traveling companions. Obey local animal control ordinances, keep your animal under restraint, be thoughtful and courteous to other travelers, and have a good trip!

Guy R. Hodge

(Individuals and organizations are invited to share their "how to" information with other HSUS readers.)