

Tips for Safe Air Travel with Pets

Step 1: Feeding

Do not feed your pet any food at least 6-hours before your journey. If you are departing on a morning flight, your pet's last meal should be dinner the evening before. Do not feed your pet breakfast the morning of departure. Your pet may have water.

A water dish that attaches securely to the door of the air crate may be half-filled with water and FROZEN the evening before. Clip the water dish to your travel crate door right before you leave for the airport. This way, the ice will melt slowly and it will provide your pet with a drink when he is inside the plane. Please DO NOT use water bottles without a water dish positioned underneath the drinking nozzle as the ball-bearing mechanism will leak water into the crate with any vibrations or movements. The water bottle will empty out into the crate and your pet may be wet and uncomfortable for the rest of the journey.

Step 2: Going to the toilet before departure

Walk your dog normally in the morning but try to build in one extra walk at least 30-minutes to 1-hour before you depart for the airport. For cats, make sure the litter box is accessible until right before you put your cat into the crate for departure. Keeping the litter box clean and scooped will help encourage your cat to go to the toilet.

Step 3: Pet Identification

Provide your pet with a collar that will not get caught on the doors of the crate. Attach two pieces of identification to the collar – a permanent ID with your name, home address and contact number and a second travel ID with the name, address and contact number where you or a contact person may be reached.

Tape a photo of your pet and a travel label to your pet carrier with your name, permanent address and telephone number and email address. Write down your final destination and flight numbers. Carry a current photograph with you of your pet for easy identification. If your pet is lost during the trip, a photograph will help airline employees to search more effectively.

Tranquilizers and Sedatives

Animals should NOT be given tranquilizers unless specifically prescribed by your veterinarian. NEVER GIVE HUMAN MEDICATION TO ANIMALS WITHOUT CONSULTING YOUR VETERINARIAN. There are several homeopathic calming remedies available that have been demonstrated to be effective on dogs and cats. Please inquire with the International Center for Veterinary Services about calming remedies if you are concerned about traveling with your pets. Give your pet at least a month to get used to being inside the crate before flying. This will help minimize stress during travel.

Additional Tips for Smooth Travel with Pets:

Air Crates:

Your air crate must be approved by your airline. Many crate manufacturers claim that their crate designs are approved by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). However, your

airline will have the final say on whether your air crate is acceptable. In general, your air crate should be made of strong and durable plastic with top and bottom sections that are screwed together with nuts and bolts. The door should be a see-through metal grate with a spring release door latching mechanism that pets cannot open. There should be ventilation panels on all four-sides of the crate. The crate should come with a water dish that can be clipped onto the metal grate door and a “Live Animal” sticker.

Line the floor of the crate with a small or folded cotton towel that already has your or your pet's scent. This will help provide familiar smells and comfortable cushioning for your pet during the journey. The towel also helps to absorb any spilled water, urine or other fluids.

NEVER lock the doors of the crate with an additional lock as this impedes the ability to release or remove your pet from the crate in the event of an emergency.

Give your pet at least a month to get used to being inside the crate before flying. This will help minimize stress during travel.

Food for Travel:

In the event of flight delays, some airlines may instruct their staff to provide food to the animals. Check with your airline first but some airlines allow owners to securely tape a small sealed bag of dry dog or cat food directly onto the crate. Only enough food for one or two meals should be packaged and taped to the crate. Specify amount of food to be fed at each meal (e.g., “One meal. Feed whole bag” or “Two meals. Feed ½ bag each meal”).

Leash for Dogs:

Some airlines may arrange for dogs to be walked in the event of a flight delay. Check with your airline first but some airlines allow owners to tape a leash packaged inside a small clear plastic bag to the outside of the crate. Dog owners should also bring a leash with them in their carry on luggage in case the leash taped to the crate is no longer attached after arrival.

Litter Box for Cats Upon Arrival:

Pack a small, clean litter box or plastic tub and some fresh cat litter in a double zip-lock bag in your check-in luggage. There should be enough litter to fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of the litter box. This gives your cat the opportunity to use the litter box immediately after arriving at your destination and reduces the stress of having to purchase a litter box and cat litter, especially if you are in an unfamiliar new city or if you arrive after the shops are already closed.