

Tips for Moving with Pets

Compliments of Marianne Howell Wright



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Moving With Your Pets

Prior To Moving:

Keep To A Normal Routine

- Leave their beds, litter boxes, and feed bowls in their customary places until the actual moving day. This will give them a feeling of comfort.
- Be consistent with their meal and play times. (If you are traveling by car, you might want to adjust their main meal to the one consumed in the evening).
- If possible, try to pack gradually. This is less confusing than a sudden disruption of items disappearing into mountains of boxes. As you finish packing a box, seal it immediately. The fewer open boxes, the less chance your pet is curled up inside of one.
- Your pets, particularly cats, might begin to show signs of nervousness as the moving date approaches. Make sure you give them plenty of attention. This will be the time that they might run away.

Preparation For A Long Distance By Car

- Your dog is probably used to riding in your car, however your cat is another matter. A few weeks prior to actually moving, try getting your cat familiar with the idea of car travel. Place him/her inside their carrier, place it in the car and take them on short trips. Slowly increase the traveling distance until they seem to understand that riding in a car doesn't have to be the most horrific experience on earth!!
- Now is also the time to make overnight reservations. For a list of hotels and motels that take pets, see the resources at the end of the report.
- You might want to be putting together a "Pet Travel Kit" for the car.
 - ✓ A sturdy pet carrier
 - ✓ A litter pan, scooper and extra litter for your cat
 - ✓ Water and food bowl

- ✓ Enough regular food to last until you can purchase more at your destination. (This will avoid upsetting your pet's digestive system)
- ✓ Enough water from home to last until you arrive at your destination. (Again this will avoid stomach upsets)
- ✓ Can opener and plastic spoons for dishing out the food
- ✓ Plastic, resealable containers
- ✓ A few weeks worth of medication
- ✓ Leash & collar (harness for cats) with current identification tags
- ✓ Grooming equipment
- ✓ Paper Towels, sponge, scooper and plastic bags
- ✓ Spray air freshener (if staying overnight at a motel / hotel)
- ✓ Favourite bed or sleeping mat
- ✓ Favourite toys and a few treats
- ✓ Health certificates and any other important travel documents

Preparation For A Short Distance By Car

- If you are moving nearby, allow your pet to investigate your new home while it is still empty. Let them explore, sniff and get a feel for this new environment. **(Make sure outside doors are locked so that the animals can't accidentally get away on you).**
- Keep your cat carrier open and available if your cat is exploring the new house. It may want to scoot back into something familiar.
- Take your dog for walks around the new neighborhood, prior to moving. Let it get acquainted with the new sounds, and smells.

Preparation For Air Travel

- Airlines are not required to carry live animals and may refuse to transport your pet if traveling conditions do not meet the standard requirement. Since airline regulations are constantly changing, make sure you receive the most recent instructions. Also, ask about any extra transportation charges and insurance coverage.

- The number of pets allowed on a flight is strictly limited, so make sure you make your reservations well in advance. Reconfirm your reservation with the airline 24 to 48 hours before departure.
- When making your reservation, consider the following:
 - ✓ The airlines has facilities at the final destination or transfer point to handle your pet
 - ✓ If connecting to another airlines ... will there be another set of transportation rules? Are you responsible making sure your pet is transferred from one airline to another?
 - ✓ Does the airlines offer counter-to-counter service (your pet will be carried on and off the aircraft by an airline employee)
 - ✓ If you will be flying with your pet, certain animals can be accepted as "Carry-On Baggage". They must be able to fit into an FAA approved carrier which is then stowed under the passenger seat. Check with the specific airlines for more details. Otherwise, your pet will be traveling in the Cargo Hold of the aircraft.
 - ✓ Try to book a direct flight. If this is not possible, try booking a midweek flight when stopovers are fewer
 - ✓ Avoid having your pet transferred from one aircraft to another. Besides additional cost, it is also additional stress for your animal.
 - ✓ Avoid shipping your pets in extreme weather conditions (above 80 degrees or below 40 degrees), at both your departure point and destination. Loading and unloading could be dangerous. If weather is warm, consider booking early morning or evening flights.
- Many airlines will ask to see a recent veterinarian Health Certificate that was issued no more than 10 days prior to the time of departure.
- If your pet will be departing **after** you, make sure you arrange for someone to look after checking-in your pet with the airline. They must have all the necessary paperwork and tickets. If your pet will be arriving at the final destination **before** you, make sure the person who will be picking up your pet has the complete flight schedule, name of the airport and Air Waybill number.
- It is up to you to retrieve your pet at the destination (usually within 90 minutes of arrival). If pets are not picked up within a reasonable amount of time, they will be boarded at a kennel at the owner's expense.

Shipping Containers:

- Shipping containers should be purchased well in advance of departure date to allow your pet to gradually become accustomed to it.
- Your pet will need to stay in this container for the entire duration of the trip. Make sure it is large enough for your dog or cat to stand, turn, and lie down comfortably.
- All carriers or containers must meet airline regulations. In general, they should be strong enough to be jostled and won't smash if it comes into contact with other freight. They should have proper cross ventilation, not leak and the doors must be secure. Container wheels will need to be removable. You don't want your pet rolling around in the cargo hold. They should also be free of any objects that might injure an animal during transport. **Most airlines sell FAA approved shipping containers for your pet through their freight department.**
- Make sure that you clearly write LIVE ANIMAL on the container or carrier, in order to alert baggage handlers.

Moving Overseas:

- If moving outside the United States, make sure that you check into the quarantine policy. To be quarantined is to be kept in solitary confinement. Some countries policies are so long in duration, it might not be fair for your pet to have to endure it.
- Pets must have been vaccinated 30 days prior to departure.

Proper Identification

- Identification (ID) tags must include your pet's name along with the name, address and phone number of a contact to reach ... while you are in transit. This can later be changed to your own address and phone number after reaching your destination. Your dog or cat should be wearing identification **at all times**
- Most states require you to have a rabies tag on your pet's collar
- You might also want to keep a recent photo and written description of your dog or cat (size, weight, colouring, markings) with you in case your pet escapes during the move.

Regulations & Requirements:

State Requirements

- If you will be crossing state lines, understand that the regulations regarding importation of animals could change depending on which state you will be traveling in.
- Well in advance of your move, contact the State Veterinarian or State Department of Animal Husbandry to receive the specific requirements for entering each of the states connected with your move. **Allow enough time to process the necessary paperwork, inoculations, etc.**
- Certain states carry out specific border inspections of all animals entering the state, while others carry out random inspections via the state highway patrol officers.
- If arriving in a new state via an airline, the state department of agriculture is usually present in the airport terminal to inspect the paperwork for your pet.

Health Certificates

- Health certificates are issued by your veterinarian and must include a pet description, an inoculation list and a statement that it is not carrying infectious disease.
- Nearly all states require an interstate health certificate for dogs and nearly half the states require one for cats
- You will need a health certificate if your pet is traveling by air
- They are only good for **10 DAYS**

Rabies Tag

- Almost all states require dogs and cats to have a rabies inoculation
- The law usually states that rabies tag be attached securely to your pet's collar.

Local Ordinances

- Check with the city or town hall in your new community for any laws regarding pets. Many communities have pet control and licensing ordinances for both dogs and cats.
- This should be done as soon as you decide to move, in order to provide enough time to acquire any necessary permits or to obtain required registration.
- License fees will vary from location to location, as will the amount of time for a new resident to obtain a pet license.

A Trip To The Vets

- Well in advance of moving, your pet should undergo a thorough physical exam. This gives you plenty of time for any unforeseen treatments or inoculations.
- Make sure all their vaccinations are up-to-date ... particularly their rabies vaccination.
- If your pet is moving to a different type of climate, discuss with your vet any change in treatments or medication this might precipitate.
- If your pet will be traveling by plane, have your vet explain the pros and cons of tranquilization. There is some discussion that a pet traveling in cargo, should not be sedated due to high altitudes. (Some airlines even have their own rules when it comes to sedation).
- If your pet is currently on medication, make sure you have enough to last until you are settled at your destination
- Obtain a copy of your pet's health records and ask your Vet if he/she can recommend another veterinarian in your new town or city. If not, check the Resources at the end of this report.

Moving Day:

Looking After Your Pet

- Make sure your pet is wearing current identification
- If possible, arrange for your pet to stay with a friend during the final days of the move. This eliminates the chance of being sealed in a box. It also reduces the stress on your pet and so there is less chance of it trying to run away.
- If your pet stays with you, the trauma of strangers coming and going and their territory being dismantled, may cause them to either hide or bolt out an open door. There is also the chance of getting stepped on or injured in some way. Therefore, consider restricting them to one empty room and keep the door shut. Provide fresh food, water, a litter pan for cats, some toys, their beds ... and their traveling carriers (they should be really well acquainted with these by now). In order for your pet not to be disturbed – or to escape – hang a big sign on the door for movers: “DO NOT OPEN – PETS INSIDE”. Arrange for a pet-sitter to come and keep an eye on them (making sure their food is replenished, they have someone to play with, and to take your dog for walks on a leash).

The Car Journey

- If you will be feeding your pet during the trip, make sure the food is the same as that which they normally eat and the water is brought from your old home.
- Your pet should stop eating 3 hours prior to starting the trip. After that, feed it only once a day (preferably in the evening, when you have stopped overnight)
- Walk your dog just prior to starting the trip. This will give you some time before your pet will need to be walked again.
- Make sure that your pet is secure inside of a travel carrier big enough to stand, turn and lie down in. For cats, the carrier should also have room for a litter pan, and water bowl.

- For large dogs, you should stop every two hours and allow them stretch. During rest stops, provide your pets with fresh drinking water in order to avoid dehydration. Remember to clean up after walking your dog.
- **NEVER** let your pet loose. **ALWAYS** make sure a leash is firmly attached **BEFORE** you open a car door. Consider simply keeping your cat safe in its carrier. Don't give your pet a chance to bolt on you. An open door, no matter how quick you are, can spell desertion!!!
- Leave a couple of car windows open slightly, for ventilation, but keep your dog from hanging it's head out. Dust and insects and blow into their eyes, and too much wind can inflame their ears.
- **NEVER** leave your pet in the car alone. Not only does this encourage theft, but on a warm day the car interior can become deathly hot within minutes ... even with the windows slightly open.
- **NEVER** let your pet ride in the back of a pickup truck or inside a trailer.
- If staying overnight at a motel, feed your pet shortly after you arrive.
- If you must go out, place the "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door and notify management. However, it is unwise to leave your pet alone in a room. It could become noisy, chew or scratch the furniture, and escape if a maid ignores the sign and opens the door.
- In the morning, make sure the room is left in the condition you found it. Air freshener will help to eliminate any lingering odors.

The Plane Journey

- Prepare your pet's carrier. Put a familiar blanket on the floor, add some favourite toys, securely attach food and water dishes to the door, along with instructions for feeding and watering over a 24-hour period of time. Even though this is longer than the traveling period, the instructions will alert airline personnel should your pet be delayed in transit.
- Make sure that the contact information of the persons responsible for your pet at both the destination and origin be clearly marked on the carrier AND on your pet's travel ID tag.
- Feed your pet at least five or six hours before flight time. Allow your pet some water at least two hours before the flight.

- Take your dog for a long walk prior to leaving for the airport.
- Arrive at the airport with lots of time to spare. If your pet is going by cargo, you will have to use the cargo terminal which is usually situated in a separate building to the main terminal.
- Walk your dog again upon arrival at the airport and administer any medication. Attach the leash to the outside of the carrier. (If placed inside, your pet might become entangled in it).
- Never let your pet out of it's carrier once you are inside the terminal.
- Call the person who will be waiting at the destination. Let them know your pet is on the way. Reconfirm the correct airport for pick-up, the flight number and the waybill number.

A Missing Pet

- If your pet does not show up at the proper airport destination, immediately contact the airline personnel. If they cannot locate it then:
 - ✓ Contact animal control agencies and humane societies in the local and surrounding areas. Check with them daily.
 - ✓ Contact the APHIS-Animal Care regional office closest to where your pet was lost. Eastern Region: (301) 734-4981, Central Region: (817) 885-6910, Western Region: (916) 857-6205. For further information, call 1-800-545-USDA.

Your New Home:

Upon Arrival

- Make sure your new home is "pet safe". Look for anything that might be poisonous, might burn, topple over or choke if swallowed. Also, check for any loose window screens that an inquisitive cat might be able to push out.
- Do not introduce new toys, food, dishes, blankets, etc. at this time. Your pet needs the comfort of familiar objects.

- Put several litter pans out for your cat. This avoids the chance of your pet marking it's new territory. Make sure you show your cat where the litter pans are located.
- Try to stick to your familiar routine as far as walks and mealtime are concerned. Pets love consistency.
- If your pet has an accident, clean up immediately or it might be prone to repeat the behaviour in the same spot.
- Select a veterinarian and then take a drive around to the clinic in order to see exactly where it's located. You don't want to wait until there is an emergency.

Just For Cats

- Cats do not like anything that is new or unpredictable. They are also control junkies and, therefore, are particularly vulnerable to stress at this time. Do not be surprised if your normally calm cat turns aggressive for awhile. Or your exuberant cat becomes withdrawn. If symptoms persist, then a visit to the Vet might be in order
- Because of a cats high degree of sensitivity, it will need to be introduced gradually to the rooms within your new home. Place your cat in a small room (possibly a bedroom) that has familiar furniture. Include their carrier (for security), food, litter pan, bed and toys. Once your cat becomes used to this environment, let it slowly explore the rest of the house. Do not force your cat to come out of the bedroom. It will when it's ready. Also, make sure you leave the bedroom door open. This is it's sanctuary and your cat will probably be scurrying in and out for awhile.
- When your cat begins to explore the rest of the house, make sure you have litter pans, food and water set up in their permanent locations. Otherwise, your pet will become trained to using the "Safety Room" for these purposes.
- This exploration process might begin after several hours of confinement, or several days. Again, let your pet set its own discovery schedule.
- If your cat is an "outdoor cat", keep it confined within the house for several days or even weeks. They must be totally adjusted to the new

home and realize that this is where it's going to be living now. If you let them out too soon, they could strike out for your former residence (no matter how far away that might be). For the first 2 or 3 days, closely supervise these outings to make sure your cat remains close to home.

- When ready to explore outside for the first time, only partially feed your cat. A slightly hungry pet will probably won't wander off too far from their food bowl.

Just For Dogs

- Before letting your dog outside, check to make sure fencing and gates are secure. You don't want your pet to escape on you.
- After you arrive, take your dog for a stroll around the new neighbourhood. Allow it to sniff and mark it's territory. Let your pet become accustomed to the new sights, sounds and smells.
- If you have regular visitors to your house (e.g. a mail carrier), introduce them to your dog so that your dog will not see them as enemies.
- Make sure your dog is wearing proper ID at all times and that you adhere to any community pet bylaw.

Resources:

www.petswelcome.com A listing by city of hotels, motels or B&B's that will let you stay overnight with your pet(s).

www.missingpet.net If your pet goes missing during the move.

www.healthypet.com Contact for a list of veterinary clinics in your new hometown.

www.airanimal.com or **www.ipata.com** if you will be shipping your pet

More Resources:



For Your Cats

www.care-for-my-cat.com

www.purrballs.com

www.thecatsite.com

www.21cats.org

www.feline-behavior.com

www.calm-your-cat.com

For Your Dogs

www.canine-behavior.com

www.k9-care.co.uk

www.canismajor.com/dog/index.html

www.dog-play.com

www.twyla.org/hints.htm

www.dogs.petloverstalk.com

