

Adobe Animal Hospital Suggestions for Flying with your Pet

Be Prepared

Prior to flying with your pet, there are few important things that must be considered. Firstly, you and your veterinarian will want to ensure that your pet is healthy enough to travel by air. Proper crating is necessary, and most cats and very small dogs are allowed to travel beneath your seat. Reservations should be made well in advance as most airlines permit only a limited number of pets per cabin. If the airline does not have cabin accommodations available, your pet may need to travel in the luggage compartment. Check with your airline for rates, requirements, and rules. Be sure to contact your veterinarian well ahead of time to schedule a health exam for a health certificate.

USDA Animal Air Travel Rules

Per the United States Department of Agriculture, main regulations for transporting pets in the luggage compartment are as follows:

Age

Dogs and cats must be at least 8 weeks old and must have been weaned before traveling with the airlines.

Kennels

Kennels must meet minimum standards for size, strength, sanitation, and ventilation.

Size and Strength

Kennels must be enclosed and allow room for the animal to stand, sit, breathe, and rest comfortably. They must be easy to open, strong enough to withstand the stress of shipping, and free of objects that could injure the animal.

Sanitation

Kennels must have a solid, leak-proof floor that is covered with litter or absorbent lining. Wire or other ventilated sub-floors are generally allowed; pegboard flooring is prohibited. This provides the maximum cleanliness for the animal in travel.

Ventilation

Kennels must be well ventilated with openings that make up at least fourteen percent of the total wall space. At least one-third of the openings must be located in the top half of the kennel. Kennels also must have rims to prevent ventilation openings from being blocked by other shipments. These rims usually placed on the sides of the kennel must provide at least three-quarters of an inch clearance.

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Grips and Markings

Kennels must have grips or handles for lifting in order to prevent cargo workers from being bitten. Kennels also must be labeled "live animals" or "wild animals" on the top and one side with directional arrows indicating position of the kennel. Lettering must be at least one inch high.

Animals per Kennel

Each species must have its own kennel with the exception of compatible personal pets of similar size. Maximum numbers include two puppies or kittens less than six months old and twenty pounds each, fifteen guinea pigs or rabbits, and fifty hamsters.

Feeding and Watering

Instructions for feeding, watering, and administering medication to the animal over a twenty-four hour period must be attached to the kennel. The twenty-four hour schedule will assist the airline in providing care for animals that are diverted from their scheduled destination. The shipper is required to document that the animal was given food and water within four hours of transport, and the certification must include the time and date of feeding. Food and water dishes must be securely attached and be accessible without opening the kennel. Food and water must be provided to puppies and kittens every twelve hours if they are less than sixteen weeks old. Mature animals must be fed every twenty-four hours and given water every twelve hours.

Health Certification

Airlines and State health officials generally require health certificates for all animals transported by air. Health certificates must be issued by a licensed veterinarian who examined the animal within ten days of transport. Dealers, exhibitors, and others regulated under the Animal Welfare Act must provide a health certificate for each dog, cat, or nonhuman primate shipped." These regulations can be reviewed directly on the USDA website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/travel.html>

Pre-Flight Prep

- Use direct flights. Multiple transfers, layovers, and stops can put additional stress on your pet.
- Withhold food six to twelve hours prior to flight.
- Abstain from traveling in excessively hot or cold temperatures. This especially applies to brachycephalic (short-nosed) breeds (Pekingese, Shih Tzu, Boston Terriers, Pugs, Bulldogs, Himalayans, Persians, etc.) whose breathing is naturally labored, making them vulnerable to heat stroke and oxygen deprivation.
- Only pets in prime health should travel by air. Please see your veterinarian to determine if your pet is healthy enough to travel.

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Health Certificates

For pets traveling by air within the United States, a health certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian is required. In order to determine which vaccines are required for travel, please visit the USDA Animal Import Regulations website at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports_states.shtml.

For pets traveling by air internationally, you can determine pet requirements for each country by visiting the website for the USDA International Animal Export Regulations at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/>. Please remember to bring any country-specific requirements or travel forms to your veterinary appointment.

Sedatives

Some owners prefer sedating their pets before flying. Excess sedation is the most frequent cause of animal death during airline travel. Some animals will have unpredictable reactions to sedatives. Due to the little known effects of sedation on animals that are already under the stress of altitude and temperature extremes, we strongly recommend discussing sedation with your veterinarian.

CONTACT YOUR AIRLINE FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS & PET POLICIES



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| American Airlines | 1(800) 433-7300 |
| Continental Airlines | 1(800) 525-0280 |
| Delta Air Lines | 1(800) 221-1212 |
| Jet Blue Airways | 1(800) JETBLUE |
| Midwest Airlines | 1(800) 452-2022 |
| Northwest Airlines | 1(800) 225-2525 |
| Southwest Airlines | 1(800) 435-9792 |
| Spirit Airlines | 1(800) 772-7117 |
| United Airlines | 1(800) 241-6522 |
| US Airways | 1(800) 428-4322 |