

MOVING WITH PETS



One detail that often escapes the moving family, but has implications to all family members, involves moving your pets, whether dog, cat, bird, rabbit or gerbil. Pre-move planning is absolutely essential, especially if you move beyond your current town or city boundaries, or it involves air travel.

Call your vet six weeks before the move for:

1. A physical exam of your pet.
2. Update of all required treatments.
3. A copy of all medical records. Put the record with your final moving papers as you will need it for licensing.

Pets are observant of household activity, and become anxious about anything unusual. They are creatures of habit by nature. Here are tips worth following as you prepare to move.

First, some general, pet-related considerations:

- Dogs accept a role of "protector" of your home, people, and property. When packing, consider asking a neighbor or friend to care for your dog or ask your kennel

or vet to bathe, groom, and keep the dog for a day or two while packing.

- Provide a safe room for your cat to stay out of the way of packers. Include food, litter box, toys and familiar items on which to sleep.
- Birds, rabbits, gerbils, etc, also deserve to be kept in as peaceful an environment as possible. Remember their fragile nervous systems.
- Just because you are moving doesn't mean the normal, daily attention you give to your pet can be overlooked. It doesn't take long to give a pat or few words of support. You will feel better. So will the pet.

Second, for an in-town move, not more than ten to twenty miles from your current home, remember these pre-move suggestions:

- Try not to bring your pets into your new home until your furnishings are in and the pet's own environment has been established. You will cut down their anxiety by pre-planning.
- Give your dog four things immediately after arrival:

1. Encouragement and praise (verbal and petting).
 2. Water, food or a treat.
 3. Time for adjustment inside the house.
 4. Exposure to the outside environment on a leash. All the scents will be new. Your dog must mark new boundaries. Allow time.
- Situate your dog's bed or cat's food and litter box before you move your pet to the new home. They will immediately find "their safe place", know where they can (and must) go for their basic necessities.

Third, moving longer distances by car (over 150 miles) requires special planning:

Driving for 3 hours may not seem long to us, but it may be an eternity to a dog, and especially to a cat. No matter how adjusted your dog is to riding in a car around town, veterinary professionals and animal psychologists say that everyone is better off and will travel more safely with pets in the right size kennel. Include favorite toys and take a dish and water bottle. Stop every 90 minutes to walk and water

your dog or to give your cat a chance to drink. Cats almost universally dislike the unstable movement of a car and will let you know by their cry, but don't let the cat out of the kennel during the trip. You and the cat will be better off when the cat remains in the kennel.

On arrival, be prepared to immediately set out a litter box, food, water and a quiet place in which your cat can recover. Please don't overlook the physical and psychological needs of your pets.

The most difficult move with pets and one requiring most pre-move planning involves air travel. The major consideration is advance planning. Airlines restrict the number of kennels carried on each flight. If your pet is tiny and its kennel fits under the seat you may be able to carry-on your pet. The best travel arrangement is to book pets on flights you take and pick up your pets with your luggage. Advance reservations are the key. Airlines suggest a 6 week advance pet reservation and ticket purchase.

Remember to arrive early, as check-in is on a first-come-first-serve basis. Airlines will also fly your pets as freight, in heated, pressurized space. However, that requires you to meet all of the above regulations, and to take care of the ground arrangements on both ends.

One final word for those of you who may be do it yourself movers. Arrange to have your pet transport-

ed in a car or by some other means other than beside you on the seat of a rental truck.

Of course, all of these tips on packing, new home preparation and family-pet arrival apply whether you are traveling by air or other means across the country. Follow this advice, and your pet's adjustment to your new home will be easier. □

AIRLINE TRAVEL NEEDS

- Pet's current medical data (vaccinations)
- Airline approved kennel (owner's or airline owned)
- Pet's ticket (about \$50.00)
- Appropriate vehicle



TIME FRAME

- Must be within 6 months of flight
- Must be reserved (if airline's) at time of ticket purchase for pet
- Reservation made well in advance
- Reserve a rental car adequate to carry your pet in the kennel if the kennel is your own. If using an airline kennel, make arrangements early to carry your pet in a kennel the pet can stand in. Undersized kennels will not be accepted by airlines.

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