

## Travelling with Pets in Cars

When the summer arrives we all look forward to going on fun and exciting trips in the car with our friends and family, often our pets are part of this too. While the planning goes on and the excitement builds we must not forget to think carefully about our pets needs. There are lots of things to consider making sure that it's an enjoyable experience for you and your pet as the summer can be a very dangerous time to travel with pets in cars and every year fatalities are caused.

In the summer a pet should never be left alone in a car. Even on a cloudy day the temperature in the car will always be higher than outside due to the sun's radiation through the clouds passing through the windows. It is impossible to guarantee adequate ventilation and pets such as cats and dogs cannot lose heat except for panting.

To help pet owners plan safe trips, whether for the day or a couple of weeks, we have listed some important questions and tips for travelling with pets in cars.

### **Is the journey practical with your pet?**

It's great to take our pets away but as much as we love going away on trips in the car we should always consider whether our pets will enjoy the trip and whether it is totally necessary and practical for them to travel with us. If not, have you got a neighbour who can 'pet sit' for you? If you are happy that your pet can travel with you please read on for further advice to ensure the experience is enjoyable for both yourself and your pet.

### **Are you going to a pet friendly location?**

Will your pet be able to get out of the car once you have arrived? Is there anywhere suitable for your pet to stretch their legs – open and shaded areas? For example, some parks and beaches have restricted pet access. Make sure you take plenty of pooh-bags along with you for your dog – a journey can cause even the most well-trained dog to act out of character! When booking accommodation always check with the proprietors that they are happy for you to bring your pets, and how many they allow!

### **How long will the journey take?**

Calculate (before you begin your journey) how long you it will take. Pack enough water for the entire journey and plan in plenty of stops along the way, ensure the stops provide shade in hot weather. It's a good idea to carry a thermos flask with you at all times containing cool water as this will help prevent it from becoming hot if temperatures begin to rise. Pets will require lots of fluids in the heat.

### **Take a pet rest**

Check frequently to make sure your pet is well, has enough water and is not finding the journey too stressful. Make sure that you all have a regular 'pet break'. Only exercise your dog on the lead unless you are absolutely sure it is safe and never let your cat out of the basket.

### **When do you plan on travelling?**

Remember that the hottest part of the day is between 11am and 3pm so if you can avoid travelling between these times. We would suggest that you plan your journey for early in the morning or later at night when the temperature is cooler.

### **Have you prepared the car before travelling?**

It is very important that you carefully consider how and where your pet will be travelling in the car. Your pet will need plenty of space and appropriate ventilation. If your pet will be travelling in the back of the car, check whether it is as cool in the back as you are in the front (but not too cold). Before beginning your journey make sure the car is cool inside. Protect your pet from any direct sunlight when travelling. Make sure you take along cleaning up materials in case your pet has an accident along the journey.

### **Pet restraint**

Make sure your pet is secure. There are many safety products on the market for pets in cars such as crates and harnesses, be sure to check these out. Use pet seat belts for larger dogs and secure, well ventilated appropriately sized baskets for smaller dogs, cats and small pets such as guinea pigs and rabbits.

### **Do you have everything your pet needs?**

Ensure you have packed everything your pet will require while away from home. A familiar toy can be very reassuring in a strange environment. Make a checklist in the days running up to your journey if necessary.

## **The Do's and Don'ts**

### **Do**

- ✓ Find out if the destination is suitable for pets
- ✓ Calculate your journey time before you set off and plan plenty of stops
- ✓ Plan stops in shaded areas in hot weather
- ✓ Pack enough water for the journey
- ✓ Carry cool water in a thermos flask
- ✓ If possible arrange to travel at the coolest part of the day, either morning or night
- ✓ Consider the purchase of safety equipment such as crates & harnesses
- ✓ Ensure your pet will have appropriate and adequate ventilation
- ✓ Check the temperature of the part of the car where your pet will be travelling
- ✓ Ensure the inside of the car is cool before setting off
- ✓ Shade your pet from the direct sunlight when travelling
- ✓ Make a checklist of all your pet's needs and ensure you have everything.
- ✓ Pack a first aid kit and your vet's details

### **Don't**

- ✗ **Don't ever leave your pet in the car alone in strong sunshine or high temperatures – even with windows open. You can never guarantee appropriate ventilation. The temperature inside the car can rise to more than double that outside the car and fatally harm your pet within minutes.**

### ***Pets are Good for People***

Pets provide us with loyalty, companionship, love and affection, as well as the many physical and psychological benefits. The least we can do to repay this is to ensure that we keep them in the best of health. A healthy pet is a happy pet and a happy pet can help us enjoy a much fuller and more rewarding life.

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**For further information, please contact the Pet Health Council on:**

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