

Airline Travel

Family vacations can become a whole new experience if the family dog is included in the excursion. However, for destinations requiring airline travel, it is essential to know some of the basic tips for working with the airlines in order to ensure a safe and rewarding travel experience for your family pet. As each airline varies in their specific requirements and regulations, please be sure to inquire with your specific airline of choice about their regulations well before arriving at the airport.

Proper planning can make your travel experience with the family dog an even more rewarding one. Call ahead and make sure that your arranged lodging allows pets and what their policies are for maid service and if you may leave your pet in its carrier if you should need to step out. Check to make sure that your pet's identification tags are up to date and include not only your name, address and telephone number, but also the address and contact information for your destination. It is also a good idea to call ahead and locate the information for local animal control offices in case your pet gets lost during your vacation.

In order to ensure that your pet has a safe and comfortable travel experience, it is essential to select an appropriate travel carrier. Your pet should also be introduced and comfortable with the carrier well before the day of the trip. The exact carrier you select will vary based on the airline, your pet and your personal style preference. However, some basic guidelines are:

- The crate should be airline approved.
- The crate should be large enough for your dog to stand up and turn around comfortably.
- The walls of the crate should be strong enough to prevent crushing.
- The walls of the crate should also be waterproof in order to prevent urine leakage and water spills. An absorbable "puppy pad" on the bottom of the crate will also assist with leakage and make your pet more comfortable.
- At least three sides of the crate must provide ventilation.
- Sturdy and easily accessible handles must be present.
- An attached water tray with access from the outside is also required.

Basic Tips for Airline Travel with Your Dog

- Schedule an appointment with your veterinarian well in advance of your travel date. This appointment will allow your vet to clear your dog for travel and gather any of the necessary paperwork required by the airlines or your travel destination.
- Determine ahead of time if your pet will be traveling in the passenger section of the aircraft with you or in the baggage compartment. Some airlines will allow one pet per passenger to travel in an approved carrier in coach or first class.
- Schedule a direct flight, if possible, and avoid layovers and connections. This pre-planning will minimize the possibility of delays and chance that your pet will be exposed to inclement weather.

Animal Care Veterinary Hospital
502 McMillan Lane
Greenville, NC 27834
252-758-9971

- Schedule your flight for slower travel times and days so that airline personnel will have time to give extra attention to your pet.
- If your pet will be traveling as cargo, avoid traveling during times of the year when the temperature outside will be below 40 degrees Fahrenheit or above 80 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Inquire if the airlines will be hand carrying your pet to the cargo hold or if he will be placed on a conveyer belt. If possible, use airlines that hand carry your pet or have other safety and care practices in place.
- Check the airlines baggage liability limitation policy. This policy may apply to your pet and it may be beneficial to purchase additional insurance.
- Make sure that identification labels are prominently and visibly displayed on your pet's carrier. These labels should include not only your name and contact information, but also your flight number, destination and destination contact information.
- Feed your dog at least six hours before the flight and do not offer food again until you have arrived at your destination.
- However, water should be offered frequently before and after the flight and should be available in the crate during the flight as well.

