



Recommendations for shipping your pet - dog or cat

When two or more pets travel together

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Welfare Act (AWA) states that "no more than two live puppies or kittens, 8 weeks to 6 months of age, that are of comparable size and weighing 20 lb. (9 kg) or less each, may be transported in the same primary enclosure via air carrier." This is a good practice to follow for all animal shipments, no matter what country they are traveling in.

Remember, animals may become stressed and aggressive when traveling by air and should not be placed in the same container unless they are young puppies or kittens. Animals which share the same household may become stressed and aggressive towards each other when traveling by air.

Some airlines restrict the maximum number of animals allowed in the cabin, check with your intended airline regarding their requirements if you are planning to carry your pet onboard.

When pets travel unaccompanied

If your pet is flying unaccompanied, the preparation of the animal is the same as when it flies with you, but you will need a Health Certificate from your veterinarian to say that the animal is healthy and fit to fly. Check the documentation requirements and regulations for your country or the importing country if the pet is traveling internationally.

Minimum container requirements, as described in the Live Animals Regulations, are mandatory for transportation of animals by air. Food and water containers (troughs) accessible from outside the container are required. The carrier, or government agency, may require that additional food be provided in a pouch attached to the container with feeding instructions.

You can either find an animal shipper who can make all the necessary reservations and take full charge from collecting your pet, boarding it if need be, taking it to the airport and have it met at the other end and delivered to destination. In some countries, this may be the easiest and surest method and some airlines will not accept animals handled by anyone other than a shipper. The airlines can usually give you a list of shippers with whom they work. But it is possible that you can do all this yourself. Check with the airline for any special requirements for shipping your pet.

Preparation for Air Transport

Before animals commence their journey, it is important that advance arrangements be made and confirmed. The most suitable routing always needs to be selected, as many airports do not have adequate facilities at destination or possible transit stops. Consideration should be given to the day on which the consignment (or consignments) is dispatched and its date of arrival, because some customs authorities and other government agencies do not work during weekends or public holidays. Advance arrangements shall include confirmation that the consignee is aware of the shipping details and has made arrangements to take delivery of the consignment on arrival.

Before the consignment is delivered to the airline, the shipper or his agent must ensure that all import and export licenses, health certificates and permits have been obtained. When these documents are required to go forward with the consignment, they must be securely attached to the air waybill. The shipper is also required to provide the airline with two correctly completed copies of the Shipper's Certification for Live Animals. It is important to note that the Shipper's Certificate also contains a declaration in relation to endangered species. An air waybill must be completed on behalf of the shipper and must clearly show the number and species of animals in the consignment. Pets accompanied by their owners do not require an air waybill and the Shipper's Certificate.

Particular care and attention should be paid when selecting the container used in the air transportation of animals, because containers must meet the minimum requirements of CR1 as published in the IATA LAR. A copy of container requirement 1 is published on the web site. Crate or container crating is very important. Purchase one in advance and get your animal used to being confined in it. Remember taking an animal out of its natural environment or surroundings is by definition stressful. You can certainly help your animal that way in coping with these new events. As a responsible pet owner, this responsibility is often overlooked.

Airlines have specific procedures in place for the acceptance, handling and delivery of your animal. The environmental needs of the animals are duly considered during loading, off-loading or at a transit stop. People loading animals should be aware of the requirements and the action to take when problems arise. Most importantly however is that the container must be able to contain the animal at all times. The Captain must always be notified of the quantity, species and location of animals onboard the aircraft.

In the best interest of animal welfare, it is essential that all aspects of the IATA Live Animals Regulations be complied with. Since many countries have incorporated the IATA Regulations into their national legislation, non-compliance may result in possible fines or confiscation of the animals or in legal action by the authorities.