

## Ten tips for a smooth move: Taming your pets throughout the turmoil

By Erin K. Witt

According to experts, moving is one of life's most stressful experiences. It's an experience that can be difficult for all members of the family—including any four-footed friends that may be making the move along with you.

To make the moving process as painless as possible for your pet, Homestore.com recommends the following tips.

**Tip #1: Visit your vet.** Ask your veterinarian to provide any required vaccinations and treatments before your move, as well as appropriate heartworm protection if the mosquito season begins earlier or ends later in the area you will be traveling to. If you feel your pet may be excitable or uncomfortable during travel, your veterinarian may even prescribe tranquilizers for the trip.

**Tip #2: Pack with your pet in mind.** To help keep your pet comfortable during the trip, pack your pet's water and food bowls, food, grooming equipment and any medication they may require. If you are not certain your pet's diet will be available at your destination, take a supply with you to avoid digestive upsets.

**Tip #3: Plan to move your pet yourself.** Federal regulations prohibit moving companies from shipping animals in moving vans. Pets will travel best in your own car, with people who care about them.

**Tip #4: Driving? Research pet-friendly travel options before you hit the road.** You'll find a very handy resource in [www.petswelcome.com](http://www.petswelcome.com). You can search by city for hotels, B&B's—even amusement parks—that are pet friendly.

**Tip #5: Keep your pet safe and healthy while on the road.** Do not feed your pet for at least three hours before leaving on a trip, and take your dog for a walk just before you start the drive. You will still have to stop along the way, but your dog will be more comfortable as the trip gets underway. During stops, provide fresh drinking water for your dog and offer a treat for being a good traveler. If the drive is eight hours or longer, give your cat the opportunity to use a litter pan and offer fresh drinking water.

**Tip #6: Flying? Know the restrictions for traveling with your pet.** Airlines are not required to carry live animals, and they reserve the right to refuse to carry an animal for any reason. Important considerations include the health and disposition of the animal, proper health certificates, and kennel markings and sizing. Airlines generally transport animals in the cargo compartment of a plane, although some will allow passengers to carry pets in the cabin of a plane if the animals fit under the passenger's seat. For specific requirements, make advance arrangements with the airline you are using.

**Tip #7: Kennel with care.** Buying a good kennel for a trip with your pet is a smart idea when driving, but is absolutely necessary if you are flying. Kennels must be enclosed and allow room for the animal to stand, sit and lie in a natural position. They must be easy to

open, strong enough to withstand the normal rigors of transportation and free of objects that could injure the animal. They must also have a solid, leak-proof floor that is covered with litter or absorbent lining; well ventilated with openings that make up at least 14 percent of the total wall space; have rims to prevent ventilation openings from being blocked by other cargo; feature grips or handles for lifting to prevent cargo personnel from having to place their fingers inside the kennel and risk being bitten; and must be marked "live animals" on the top and one side, with directional arrows indicating proper position of the kennel.

**Tip #8: Bring along your bird (or other small animal.)** Birds and small pets, such as gerbils and hamsters, can generally travel in their cages if you are going by car. Birds are very susceptible to drafts and sudden changes in temperature, as well as being easily frightened. To keep your bird calm, its cage should be covered while on the road. Remove the water container from the cage to avoid spills. Place the cage in the car out of drafts but with plenty of ventilation, and be sure it will not tip over. Give the pet fresh water at every stop as small pets become dehydrated very quickly, particularly during hot weather, and feed at normal intervals.

**Tip #9: Know the importance of identification.** If your pet is lost, identification aids could make the difference in locating it. Be sure your pet's identification tags are securely attached to a collar or leg band. ID tags should include your pet's name, your name, address and phone number, destination address and phone number. Most states also require dogs and cats to have a rabies tag on their collars. You should also take color pictures of your pet with a written description of its size, colorings and distinguishing marks.

**Tip #10: Give lots of TLC.** Traveling can be confusing and frightening for many animals. Be affectionate and playful with your pet before and during the move, and try to be patient with misbehavior upon arrival. It may take your pet awhile to get acclimated to his new home.