

Pets and Car Travel Safety

Whether planning a summer vacation or a weekend road trip, people have several choices when it comes to their pets. For some, the best options are to leave them with a family member or a pet-sitter or to board them at a kennel. Another option is to take one's furry friend along for the ride. While traveling with a pet makes for a fun family experience, there are things that must be taken into consideration when driving. Not all pets are comfortable with riding in a car. Some animals get carsick very easily while others do not. For that reason, one must consider their animal's disposition and ability to travel any significant distance by vehicle. Additionally, pet owners must understand what it takes to travel safely with a pet in the car.

1 Restraining Your Pet

Restraints are one of the most important ways to keep pets safe while traveling by car. In the event of an accident, restraints will protect animals from being thrown around or ejected from the vehicle. In addition, they also protect the driver and other passengers from the impact of an unrestrained pet during a collision. Accident prevention is another important reason for restraining pets. In an attempt at showing affection, pets may become a distraction that prevents drivers from safely operating their car. For example, a dog may want to sit in the driver's lap while the vehicle is in motion. This may interfere with the driver's ability to see clearly or steer properly.

There are several different types of pet restraints that are available. For dogs, options include harnesses, safety belts, and even car seats and carriers. Most pets travel well in car carriers, while travel cages are the best option when taking a long distance road trips with a pet. They will need to be able to have a place to eat, sleep unfettered and drink while you drive. Regardless of the type of restraint, it should be secured according to the manufacturer instructions and physically attached to the backseat of the car or SUV. Car carriers must also be large enough for one's pet to lie down in comfortably, and it should have good ventilation.

Here are some examples of these types of restraints for reference:

- [**KURGO SKYBOX DOG BOOSTER SEAT**](#)
- [**KURGO \(DOG\) CAR RESTRAINTS**](#)
- [**PETEGO JET SET PET CARRIER**](#)
- [**K&H TRAVEL SAFETY CARRIER**](#)
- [**DOUBLE OCCUPANCY CAR KENNEL**](#)
- [**CLASSIC METAL CRATE**](#)

2 Pet-Safe Vehicles

Almost any car that is safe for humans, features air-conditioning, and has the proper restraint systems in place can be safe for pets. When buying a newer vehicle, pet owners may find that some manufacturers offer models with additional features that add to the safety of animal passengers. The specific car models are ever-changing, but some features that make vehicles safer for pet travel may include cushioned cargo area for pet beds, pet barriers that can be bolted in and installed by the dealer, side-curtain airbags, anchors and tethers to secure pet safety seats and harnesses, or pre-installed pet restraints. Cars with privacy glass (tint) can help protect pets by blocking some of the heat from the sun, while available fold-down seating and in-floor storage can provide space for pets and protect them from unsecured cargo in the event of an accident. Even rearview cameras are a safety feature that can protect pets that are outside of the car when the vehicle is backing up

3 Do Not Let Pets Hang Out of the Window

It may look harmless and cute, but a dog that rides with its head outside of the window risks serious injury. As a car moves at high speeds, it is hit by debris that has been carried by the wind or kicked up by other vehicles. Windshields protect car passengers, and motorcycle riders have their helmets; a pet that hangs its head out of the car window has none of these protections. Debris from the road can hit a dog in the face, causing injury. A dog may also fall from or jump out of the car, and in the event of a collision, a pet hanging out of a window most assuredly risks injury or even death. Pets hanging out of windows while loose in the car can also present a distraction to the driver and cause accidents.

4 Never Leave Pets in the Car

When a pet is left inside of a vehicle when traveling close to home or far away, it is unable to ask for help or for you to open the door. Animals left in cars are helpless, and annually, hundreds die because they are left inside of a parked vehicle. These deaths are often due to heat-related problems such as heat exhaustion or heatstroke. When a car is parked, the interior temperature may rise by as much as 20 degrees in as little as 10 minutes. The temperature will continue to rise the longer it sits, even if the windows are left open or the car is parked beneath a tree. After an hour, the temperature inside of the vehicle can be roughly 40 degrees higher than the temperature outside of it. That means that on a bright yet relatively mild day, with outdoor temperatures of 65 degrees Fahrenheit, a car's interior could reach 105 degrees or higher.

DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS IN THE CAR UNATTENDED - FOR ANY REASON...

5 Make Sure you Have Pet Friendly Reservations

- Research hotel pet fees and restrictions
- Ask about the hotel property and noise levels
- Reserve early and verify your route
- Book a room on the first floor
- Follow the hotel's pet rules
- Don't forget the cleaning supplies

6 What's in your Pet's Traveling Kit

In addition to travel papers (health records), food, bowl, leash, a waste scoop, plastic bags, grooming supplies, medication and a pet first-aid kit, pack a favorite toy or pillow to give your pet a sense of familiarity.

Make sure your pet has a microchip for identification and wears a collar with a tag imprinted with your home address, as well as a temporary travel tag with your cell phone, destination phone number and any other relevant contact information.

This may all seem that these tips are common sense, but they are often ignored with dire consequences. Though short and to the point, these simple tips will help you and pet travel safely. The goal is to have an enjoyable trip with as little fanfare as possible.

So pack up, grab your furry friend and enjoy your travels!