



## **20 AIR TRAVEL TIPS**

**By Dr. Karen Halligan**

- **Always try to book a direct flight to avoid plane changes.** This reduces the risk that your pet will escape when being loaded or unloaded, end up on the wrong plane or be left on the tarmac during extreme weather conditions.
- **Avoid traveling during the busiest travel times of the year and try to book flights during off-hours.**
- **Don't give your pet tranquilizers if she is flying in cargo.** Sedatives have side effects like lowering blood pressure, which can make your pet groggy and cold, and there's no one to check on her if problems arise.
- **If you're flying during the summer, choose early morning or late evening flights.** This way you avoid extreme temperatures that your pet may be subjected to while being loaded onto and off of the plane.
- **During colder months, choose midday flights.** The live-cargo compartments of airplanes are pressurized and kept between 50 and 70 degrees F, but your pet's crate might be on the runway or another area exposed to temperature extremes for a while before being loaded, especially if there is a flight delay.
- **Make your reservations early.** Each airline has its own set of guidelines and regulations that depend on the type of animal that will be flying. Ask the airlines what documents they require, such as vaccination records or a health certificate.
- **Put a familiar blanket in the crate with your pet.** Don't leave toys, rawhides or anything in the crate that your pet could choke on.
- **Reconfirm your flight arrangements the day before you leave.** Sometimes airlines will have unexpected flight changes or embargo rules that could affect traveling with your pet.
- **Always travel on the same flight as your pet.** Be sure to watch at the gate to make sure your pet is being loaded. Don't board the plane until you're sure your pet is on board.

- **If your flight has a layover, schedule one with enough time for you to walk your pet.** Be sure to tell the airline that you want to claim and recheck your pet yourself, and never change planes without first checking on your pet.
- **Arrive at the airport early.** Take your pet for one last walk and place him in the crate yourself thirty minutes prior to takeoff.
- **Always let the flight crew and captain know that you have a pet in cargo.** Be sure to pick up your pet promptly upon arrival at your gate.
- **If you insure your pet, do so for \$10,000.** Premiums are minimal, and it helps ensure that your pet is handed safely.
- **Stop giving your pet water or food 4 hours before it is crated.**
- **Call the airlines ahead of time to discuss crate regulations.** Each airline has its own conditions that apply to your pet's crate, whether you're carrying on or your pet is in cargo. The airline has the final say as to whether it will accept your crate.
- **Clearly label the outside of your crate.** The label should include your pet's name, age, breed and medical concerns, as well as your name, address, cell phone number, travel date, airline, flight number and destination contact number.
- **Write "Live Animal" on the top and sides of the crate.** Use letters that are at least one inch tall with an arrow indicating the crate in an upright position.
- **Write "Do not open this door without permission from owner or licensed vet" above the crate door.** Make sure the crate door is securely closed but not locked.
- **Affix a current photograph of your pet to the top of the crate.** This helps identify your pet and can prove crucial should your pet escape.
- **Immediately upon entering baggage claim area notify airline personnel that your pet is on board your flight and to please expedite and insure its safe offloading.**

## DOC HALLIGAN

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