

# Traveling and moving with your cat

## **Use a solid, plastic cat carrier**

For trips over two hours, use a plastic, hard-sided carrier lined with newspaper, covered with a blanket. It must be large enough to allow your cat/kitten to turn around, sit up and stand up. Cloth carriers aren't recommended because the sides could collapse.

## **Getting used to the carrier**

Get your cat or kitten used to the carrier long before your trip. Encourage him/her to go in by placing toys and treats inside. Make the carrier accessible. After he/she is used to it, take him/her on short trips.

## **Water for cats**

If possible, provide a small amount of water in a higher-sided bowl that won't spill. If you can't find a bowl that won't spill, stop and offer water to your pet every hour. Bring a few gallons of water from your former home that your pet is used to drinking. Different water could upset your cat's stomach.

## **Feeding**

Cats don't need to be fed for trips under two hours. For longer trips, place food in your cat's carrier. Or offer food every two to three hours. Don't be too concerned if your cat is too stressed to eat.

Kittens can't go as long as cats without eating and drinking. To ensure they eat, stop and offer food every two to three hours.

## **Harnesses and leashes**

Get your cat used to a harness or leash long before your trip. Start by letting your cat wear the harness around the house for short periods of time.

Make sure that your pet has his/her harness on the entire time he/she is out of the carrier if you walk your cat at a rest stop.

## **The right temperature**

If you're comfortable then your cat will be comfortable. Avoid extreme temperatures/temperature changes.

## **Never leave your cat alone**

If you must leave your car, make sure someone remains with your cat to monitor the temperature.

## **Identifying your cat**

Microchip your pet AND use a collar with a phone number. Bring a picture of your pet in case he/she escapes.

### **Get checkup, vaccinations before travel**

Have your pet checked and vaccinated before a long trip. Make sure your pet's vaccine record is easily accessible. If your move involves crossing state lines, your pet must have a health certificate issued within 10 days of travel. Authorities could ask to see the certificate if you are stopped.

### **Public transportation**

Always call your airlines first. Airlines usually require a health certificate issued within 10 days of travel, as well as a current vaccination certificate. Other restrictions may apply. Greyhound Bus and Amtrak only allow service animals. Call individual boating lines to find out their requirements.

### **Sedating cats**

The only time cats should be sedated during travel is if they become so upset that they are in danger of hurting themselves. Sedation causes pets to lose their sense of balance, leading to injury and even death from falls. They also can have trouble breathing. Only use a sedative from your veterinarian. Make sure you can observe your cat at all times. To make sure it's safe, test the sedative on your cat long before travel. Never sedate a kitten.

### **Moving more than one pet**

If you are moving multiple pets, always place them in separate carriers to avoid stress.

### **If your pet gets sick during travel**

Before you begin your trip, you should always identify animal hospitals on your route in case of an emergency. [Click here to find AAHA hospitals.](#)

### **Settling into your new home**

If you have a pet who adapts well, you can let him/her roam around the house. Show your cat where the litter box and food are. If your cat doesn't adapt well to new situations, confine him/her in one room with his/her litter box and food. Allow your pet to explore the house after he/she seems comfortable. If your cat didn't eat a lot during the trip, offer him/her small amounts of food every couple hours, so he/she doesn't gorge itself and become sick.