

Welfare of Animals During Transport

Protecting the Welfare of Pet Animals (Cats and Dogs) During Journeys: Advice for Carriers

This document is now out of date and has been withdrawn

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
Telephone 020 7238 6000
Website: www.defra.gov.uk

PB13586

© Crown copyright 2011

Copyright in the typographical arrangement and design rests with the Crown. This publication (excluding the royal arms and departmental logos) may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as crown copyright and the title of the publication specified.

Information about this publication and further copies are available from:

Animal Welfare
Defra
Area 8B
9 Millbank, c/o Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

Email: animalwelfare@defra.gov.uk

Published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

June 2011

Contents

Introduction	3
Legislation	3
Fit to travel.....	3
The use of sedatives is not recommended.....	4
The travel enclosure or container	4
Acceptance, check-in / reception	5
The journey.....	6
Heat stroke (Dogs).....	6
How can you recognise overheating and its severity?	6
Travel by FERRY	6
Travel by RAIL - Channel Tunnel Shuttle.....	7
Travel by AIR	8
Further advice	8

This document is now out of date and has been withdrawn

Introduction

This guidance is intended to assist carriers (e.g. ferry operators, airlines, railway companies) to care for and protect the welfare of pet animals during journeys to and from Great Britain. Although primarily directed at carriers accepting passengers who are transporting pet animals (dogs and cats) to England under the 'Pet Travel Scheme' (PETS), the principles apply to the transport of any pet dog or cat on other journeys.

Separate guidance is available for pet owners.

Legislation

Whenever animals are transported, including journeys with pets, the law requires that:

"No person shall transport animals or cause animals to be transported in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to them."¹

If transport involves a commercial transaction between the carrier and the pet owner there are further obligations that must be complied with by the carrier. Therefore, the carrier may specify, within its own terms and conditions of carriage of pet animals, detailed requirements which have to be complied with.

Fit to travel

The pet owner has the primary responsibility to ensure that the animal is healthy and fit for the intended journey. An animal should not normally be considered fit for transport if it:

- is ill or injured (except for insignificant illness or injury);
- is newly born with an unhealed navel (note that animals under about 10 months old are not eligible to enter England under PETS);
- is incapable of feeding itself and not accompanied by its mother;
- has given birth within 48 hours before starting the journey;
- is heavily pregnant and likely to give birth during the journey.

¹ Article 3 of EU Regulation 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations. This Regulation is implemented in England by the Welfare of Animals (England) (Transport) Order 2006, and parallel legislation in Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland. Full guidance on the Order is available on the Defra website.

The use of sedatives is not recommended

Particularly where air transport is involved because the effect on the animal may be unpredictable. If administered by the owner, sedatives should only be given under veterinary guidance and the animal should be accompanied by a certificate which states the drug, dosage, and date/time of administration.

If there is any doubt about the fitness of a pet to travel, veterinary advice should be sought before the animal is accepted for shipment.

Carriers should, when necessary, refuse shipment of pet animals in circumstances where they are unable to provide suitable conditions for safeguarding animal welfare throughout the journey. Carriers may also refuse shipment if the animal appears not to be fit to travel.

Carriers are recommended to have contingency arrangements for obtaining speedy veterinary advice if a pet animal becomes ill or injured while in their control.

The travel enclosure or container

The pet owner should also have carefully considered the effect that prolonged confinement will have on the animal, particularly taking account of the nature and size of the animal, the length and type of journey.

The pet owner has the primary responsibility to ensure that the animal is properly confined for travel. Carriers should be aware of the following advice in this respect.

The pet should be securely confined within its travel enclosure or container. It is advisable for the access door to be kept locked, particularly when the pet owner is not in attendance.

The travel enclosure and any container used should be of a suitable size for the animal, sufficient at least for it to stand, sit and lie down in a natural position, and to turn around easily.

The enclosure or container should not contain anything which could injure the animal, and should be designed so that no part of the animal (e.g. head, paws, tail) can protrude or become trapped.

Adequate ventilation is essential for all stages of transport, bearing in mind that the travel enclosure and any container within it may be in 'still air' conditions for long periods of time.

A means of ensuring that water is available at all times, and when necessary feed, should be provided if the journey is to last more than a few hours. The utensils for watering and feeding should be placed in or fixed to the container so that they cannot be knocked over or the contents spilt, and on longer journeys should be capable of being re-filled easily. Use of an anti-spill water bowl is strongly recommended.

Appropriate and absorbent bedding should be provided, and this may need to be changed during a very long journey. Newspaper is ineffective and should not be used.

For travel by air the pet container must by law conform to the requirements of the IATA Live Animals Regulations

Acceptance, check-in / reception

Carriers should establish with port/airport terminal operators appropriate arrangements for pets waiting for check-in or embarkation. These arrangements should take account of the following points.

The length of time that a pet has to wait at check-in or for embarkation, which should be minimised so far as is practicable. A vehicle or container with an animal in it should not have to wait for a long period in a hot or sunny position, nor be subjected to extreme cold. A shaded or sheltered place as appropriate should be made available wherever possible.

Animals should never be left in vehicles in direct strong sunshine and/or high temperatures as it is difficult to ensure adequate ventilation.

Pet animals should be given the opportunity to urinate and defecate shortly before being confined and embarked for travel. It is recommended that an "exercise area" for this purpose should be available to travellers.

Where a carrier becomes aware of any vehicle or container with a pet inside which has been left unattended by the passenger, particularly where vehicle windows are closed or there otherwise appears to be insufficient ventilation, the pet owner should be contacted as soon as possible and asked to remedy the situation.

Once checked-in the pet animal will normally remain under the direct supervision of its owner until embarkation. However, for air transport the carrier will have taken responsibility once accepted at check-in.

The journey

The vehicle, travel enclosure and any container used should be adequately ventilated at all times. Heat and moisture can quickly build up inside unless there is a good airflow through it.

Animals should never be left in vehicles in direct strong sunshine and/or high temperatures as it is difficult to ensure sufficient ventilation to keep them cool. Unless animals are fully acclimatised, overheating, distress and suffering is likely when the temperature exceeds 25 degrees celcius for more than a few minutes. The temperature in a car in full sun on a hot day can rise to double that outside of the vehicle in a short time, leading rapidly to distress for any animal in the vehicle.

Heat stroke (Dogs)

Dogs differ crucially in their ability to cope with heat. They lose heat mainly by panting and, unlike people, do not sweat profusely. Dogs with snub noses (e.g. Pekinese) or dogs with breathing problems are much more prone to heat stress. Long haired dogs are more susceptible than those with short hair.

How can you recognise overheating and its severity?

First signs are often increased panting and increased activity with barking or whining. Dogs will look obviously agitated.

Then excessive salivation can occur, often with drooling and with strands of saliva hanging from the mouth.

Extreme panting and dark coloured gums will follow. Glassy eyes and stupor may be seen.

Once body temperature is raised to the point that cell death occurs then seizures, coma and death follow.

The key to successful recovery from overheating is early detection and prompt treatment. Remove the animal to a cool shaded place, provide water to drink and spray the animal with cool water (cooling may also be achieved by blowing cool air from a fan). Seek immediate veterinary advice if there is not a prompt response to cooling.

Travel by FERRY

A vehicle containing an animal should be located in a position where sufficient ventilation will be provided throughout the journey and where access to the animal is possible. Passengers with pets travelling on one of the longer ferry

routes are advised to arrive at the port early so that their vehicle can be positioned in the best part of the car deck for the welfare of the pet. The interior of a vehicle stowed in strong sunlight on an open deck, or in an enclosed deck where the ambient temperature is likely to exceed 25°C for more than a few minutes, will very quickly become overheated, with consequent distress and suffering to the animal inside.

Staff responsible for directing vehicles into position on the vessel should ensure that, when a passenger vacates a vehicle with a pet animal inside, windows have been left sufficiently open for ventilation, and the animal cannot escape, and the doors are locked.

Sufficient ventilation of the vehicle deck should be maintained at all stages of the voyage.

The passenger should be given written advice about how to request and gain access to the pet animal at appropriate times and intervals. Providing that appropriate measures have been taken, access should only be necessary on voyages that last longer than 2 hours.

On-board staff including vehicle deck patrols should pay attention to each animal that is being carried, and report any concerns (e.g. should a pet appear to be in distress) to the appropriate senior officer as soon as possible, and the pet owner should be contacted.

On very long ferry crossings (e.g. those of 24 hours or more), or long voyages on other vessels, it is recommended that no pet animal is left confined in a passenger vehicle - but is transferred into a container of suitable size, design and construction. This container should be located in a suitable secure area of the vessel where:

- ventilation and shade is adequate to maintain the interior of the container at an appropriate temperature and environment for the animal;
- access is available (by arrangement at suitable intervals) for the pet owner to tend, water and feed the animal;
- there is the facility for a dog (during a voyage of more than 24 hours) to be exercised on a lead, and to urinate and defecate outside its container.

Travel by RAIL - Channel Tunnel Shuttle

A pet animal will remain with, and in the care of, the passenger during transit on the Shuttle, and should be kept confined within the vehicle.

On-board staff should pay attention to each animal which is being carried, and discuss any concerns (e.g. an animal in apparent distress) with the owner and, if

appropriate, report the details to the appropriate senior officer as soon as possible.

Travel by AIR

Transport of animals by air must by law be in accordance with the IATA Live Animals Regulations.

Airlines should check that the container is appropriate for the animal and meets IATA specifications before accepting the shipment.

Every pet animal travelling to Great Britain by air must be carried in accordance with the provisions of its animal health documentation and/or import licence. In most cases this will require your animal to be transported in the aircraft hold as manifest freight.

Further advice

In England

<http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/contact-us/index.htm>

In Scotland

Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Animal Health and Welfare Branch
Pentland House
47, Robbs Loan
Edinburgh
EH14 1TY
Tel: 0131 244 6181 Fax: 0131 244 6616

In Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government
Agriculture Policy Division
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ
Tel: 02920 823592 Fax: 02920 823352

Pet Travel Scheme

Defra PETS Helpline on: +44 (0) 870 241 1710 (Monday to Friday 8.30am - 5.00pm).