

# Tips for Moving with Pets

By Movers Directory.com



Moving can be traumatic for humans, but it is even far worse for household pets since most of their lives are limited to the inside of our homes.

Moving is particularly worse for household pets that never venture outside, such as indoor cats. Add to that the removal of one of your pet's favorite pieces of furniture, and you have, effectively, changed his entire world.



Fortunately, there are steps you can take to make yourself and your pet's move a whole lot easier at both ends and on the road.

## Before the Move

- Make certain your household pet is wearing proper identification and any required license tags in case they get lost.
- Ask your veterinarian for a copy of your pet's medical history to take with you, and be sure all shots are current.
- Shortly before the move, your pets may become nervous because of all the unusual activity. Keep a close eye on them; stress may cause them to misbehave or run off. Consider having them boarded during the most hectic days.
- When you move, take along a health certificate and a rabies vaccination certificate. The health certificate, signed by your veterinarian, says your pet is in good condition. The rabies certificate states when and where your pet was vaccinated.
- If you move across state lines, call or write the state veterinarian or State Department of Animal Husbandry for laws on the entry of animals. Some states require up-to-date rabies vaccinations. For example, the state of Hawaii requires a 120-day quarantine for dogs and cats that have just moved from another state.
- After the move, give your pets time to adjust to the new neighborhood. Don't let your pets roam freely until they learn where new "home" is now -- otherwise they may get lost!
- If your pet has an ID implant, remember to have updated contact information.

## **Preparing For the Move**

### **Take Your Time When Packing**

Stretch out your moving preparation time over several weeks. Avoid panic in the last days. Take steps to ensure that moving day is as relaxed as possible for you and your pets.

### **Make Travel Arrangements for Your Pets**

If your move involves air travel, contact airline carriers one month in advance. Ask about their pet regulations, and make reservations. Choose a nonstop flight to avoid extra handling and climate and air-pressure changes.

### **Visit Your Pet's Veterinarian before Moving**

A couple weeks before moving, request a copy of veterinary records, a rabies vaccination certificate, and a health certificate. Be sure your pets are up to date with their shots. If your pet is a senior or has health problems, ask whether a mild sedative would be advisable before travel. Can your vet recommend another in your new location? For out-of-state moves, contact the State Department of Animal Husbandry or the state veterinarian about entry regulations—almost all states have entry laws for most animals except tropical fish.

### **Don't Change - Maintain Your Pet's Routine**

Keep your pets' routines, such as feedings and walks, as normal as possible in the week before moving. Because dogs and cats need to feel in control, they might exhibit behavioral changes or even become ill when stressed. Treat them with the same level of attention you would ordinarily give them.

### **Make a Special Room for Your Pet**

A few days before moving, choose a small room to be the "pet room." Tape a sign to the door that says "Pets: Do Not Open." Make the sign large enough that friends or movers can see it easily. Move food and water bowls, as well as toys, into this room. Provide dogs and cats with sturdy carriers equipped with litter box (for cats), chew toys, or favorite objects that have a familiar smell. Leave carrier doors open so pets can adapt to them before travel day. On moving day, keep animals in their carriers. As an alternative, consider boarding dogs and cats, or ask a friend to care take your dogs during the last few days.

### **Get Tags and Leashes for Your Pets**

If you have a dog or an indoor/outdoor cat, buy or create identification tags with your new address and phone number. Be sure your pets are wearing them during travel. While you're at it, pick up a cat leash—you'll need it if you're taking a long road trip or an airplane.

### **Moving Tips For When On the Road with Your Pets**

If you're traveling by car, keep your pet cats and pet dogs in carriers large enough to accommodate food and water bowls plus a small litter box. Stop about every two hours to give larger pets some fresh air. Be sure to use a leash if you let your pets out. Maintain a comfortable car temperature for all pets, and don't ever leave animals

alone in a car on a hot day. Even with the windows cracked, this can be fatal. Birds and other small pets (hamsters, guinea pigs, and the like) are especially susceptible to drafts and heat. Cover cages to keep animals calm and well protected, and remove water bottles except during rest-stop water breaks.

### **Travel Checklist When Moving With Pets**

- Veterinary records, certificates, and recent photos.
- Medications
- Beds (pillows, towels, or other crate liners)
- Plastic bags and scoops for dogs
- Your pets' usual foods and plenty of water from the home you're leaving (changing their water source can be disorienting and upset their stomachs)
- Food and water bowls, a can opener, and re-sealable lids
- Leashes for cats and dogs
- Litter box for cats
- Cage covers for birds and rodents
- Paper towels for messes
- Toys, chew bones, and treats
- Provisions for the first day at the new home

### **Moving In & Settling In With Your Pets**

#### **Some Helpful Dog and Cat Care When Moving In:**

- Again, choose a small room in your new home to be the "pet room", where dogs and cats can feel secure as you move in furniture and belongings. As much as possible, have furniture, bowls, and toys in place before you let your pets out of their crates.
- Don't let pets outdoors without a leash until they've adapted to their new surroundings—several days to a week for cats; dogs adapt more quickly.
- Continue giving your pets water from home for the first few days.
- If your pets misbehave, consider ways to reduce their stress. If you suspect they may be ill, make a veterinary appointment. Don't punish your pets for initial misbehavior.
- Cats especially will not understand, and distrusting you will only increase stress and stress-caused behaviors.
- Clean up "accidents" immediately. Animals tend to repeat behaviors in the same areas, so remove odors as quickly as possible.