

PCSing with a Pet

Whether moving to the next state or halfway around the world, pets are an important concern. There are many issues to evaluate and plans to make.

Should I Move My Pet?

The most important decision is whether or not to relocate your pet. Considerations include:

- The type of pet. Some pets do not travel well or would be very expensive to move.
- The pet's age and health.
- The climate and living conditions at your new duty station.
- Possible quarantine regulations. Consider length of time and cost when determining if your pet is fit for quarantine.

Should I Take My Pet to the Veterinarian Before Being Moved?

It is very important to have your pet checked by a veterinarian before you move and get all necessary health records and certificates.

- Pets should have a complete health examination and up-to-date vaccinations.
- Obtain health and rabies certificates from a USDA-certified veterinarian. Your pet's health certificate should include a complete description of the pet, a list of all inoculations, and a statement that it is free from infectious diseases. Be sure to have up to date vaccinations and health papers.
- If your pet is excitable, or prone to motion sickness when traveling, ask your veterinarian to prescribe medications.
- If your pet is on any medication, be sure that you have enough for the first month or so after your move.

What Type of Identification Should My Pet Have?

Identification is a must!

- Be sure your pet's identification tags are attached securely.
- Tags should include your pet's name; your name, address and phone number; and destination address and phone number. Most states also require dogs and cats to have a rabies tag on their collars.
- Many installations now require that pets be "micro-chipped" for identification purposes. Be sure to carry a copy of the code with you.
- Create a file with a picture of your pet; the pet's license number; name, species; body size; weight and color/markings. Include old and new veterinarians' contact information, health condition and necessary medication.

How Can My Pet Be Transported?

Pets usually are transported by air, with the pet either accompanying you or traveling as air freight; or in your personal motor vehicle. Either way, make arrangements for transportation well in advance. Consider having your favorite kennel arrange for your animal's travel. Your pet can be boarded a few days ahead, and the kennel can arrange for transportation and care at both ends.



Air Travel

- Air Mobility Command (AMC) will transport dogs and cats only when moving to or from overseas. This is not an entitlement, and service members will be required to cover the cost of transport.
- Most commercial airlines *do not* transport pets during the summer months.
- Certain animals are accepted as baggage at passenger check-in locations, and others are accepted as cargo at the airline cargo facilities. For the specific requirements pertaining to your animal, make advance arrangements with the airline you are using. All pets too large to travel on-board must be placed in FAA-approved kennels for transport.
- Airlines are not required to carry live animals, and they reserve the right to refuse to carry an animal for any reason.

Car Travel

- Pets that have not been exposed to car travel should be taken on a few trial trips.
- Ask your veterinarian about pet carriers and the possibility of a mild sedative to relax your pet during the move.
- Basic necessities include: food, bottled water, treats, dishes, favorite toys, a leash, bedding, a scooper and plastic bags.
- Do not feed your pet for several hours before leaving on a trip. Take your dog for a walk just before you start the drive. You still will have to stop along the way, but your dog will be more comfortable as the trip gets underway.
- If your pet travels in a kennel, ensure that water is provided and that proper identification is on the kennel and your pet.
- Take several stretch breaks and relief breaks along the way. During stops, provide fresh drinking water. You also may reward your pet with a treat for being a good traveler.
- Be cautious of leaving your pet unattended in the vehicle; moderate to extreme temperatures can injure a pet seriously.
- Look for pet-friendly lodging if you will require an overnight stop en route.

Are There Requirements When You Move a Pet to a New State Or Country?

Find out about any rules or regulations regarding pets in your new community. Many states have their own unique laws concerning pets. Check with your veterinarian. Hawaii, U.S. territories and certain foreign governments have quarantine or health requirements for arriving pets. For U.S. territories and foreign countries, contact the appropriate embassy, governmental agency, or consulate at least four weeks in advance.

Are There Internet Sites Where I Can Get More Information?

Check out the following websites to obtain further information on moving with pets:

- American Veterinary Medical Association at www.avma.org
- American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) www.healthypet.com
- Pet Travel Resources www.petswelcome.com
- International Pet and Travel Association (IPATA) <https://www.ipata.org>
- American Humane Society <https://americanhumane.org/fact-sheet/fostering-military-pets>
- Amtrak for Pets <https://www.amtrak.com/pets>

How Can I Keep My Pet Happy and Safe During the Move?

Pets are very sensitive to changes in their environment. It is important to help them feel safe and secure.

- As much as possible, keep your pets' schedules and feedings normal.
- Make sure they have favorite toys or blankets during the trip.
- While packing and unpacking, confine pets to small areas or arrange for a pet sitter or boarding service.



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