



The Essential Guide to Moving Pets

Pets are an integral part of our families. They bring joy, companionship, protection, and liveliness to our homes. Like us, our animals are attached to where they live, which is why ensuring they are safe and comfortable during a move is so important. Moving is stressful on animals as they see their current environment change in preparation, see and hear unfamiliar people, endure transport, and must then get acquainted with their new home. A pet owner has several steps they can take to make sure their pet is moved as safely and smoothly as possible. Depending on the type of animal being moved, there may be additional steps needed to complete their transport. However, regardless of the pet in question, a moving truck is not a suitable place for any pet and does not serve as an option for transporting animals. Below you will find a detailed breakdown of the steps required to move most types of common pets.

Preparation Steps: Dogs & Cats

1. Visit the Vet

As mentioned, moving is stressful on pets. All animals should be examined by their veterinarian prior to the move to ensure that they are in good health. Be sure to ask for an updated copy of your pet's health records to bring with you during the move. If you have a pet that can be microchipped but hasn't been, now would be the time to do it. Moving can provide for an increase in runaway risks with more open doors and changes to routine. On the off chance your pet makes a run for it, a microchip can help you reunite sooner. Always ask your vet for tips on how to transport your pet safely.

2. Medications

If your pet takes ongoing medications, ensure that you have at least a 30-day supply to bring with you. This will allow you some time to find a veterinarian in your new city.

3. Ask Around and Research

Whether it's your current vet or friends in your new location, be sure to ask for referrals for a new veterinarian. You can also research online in advance of your move by visiting www.healthypet.com to find an American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) approved veterinary professional.

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4. Check Restrictions

Make sure your pet or pets are not subject to restrictions in your new country, state, county, or city. Additionally, if you are moving into a community with a homeowner's association, you may be subject to additional pet restrictions and will want to contact them in advance to verify potential conflicts. It is not uncommon for governments at all levels or homeowner's associations to have restrictions on animal types, breeds, and the number of animals. Be sure that wherever you are heading, your pets are welcome upon arrival. If you are moving to a new state or country, visit <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel> to check for potential restrictions or requirements for your pets ahead of time.

Day of the Move:

Depending on the type of pet you have your preparations for move day may vary. For cats and dogs, it is always a wise option to consider boarding them or taking them to a pet daycare. Doing so helps you avoid the possibility of them running out of an open door, biting or scratching the movers, and keeps them away from the hubbub. If you choose to keep your pet at home on move day, be sure to allocate a room just for them that has their favorite toys, food, water, and a litter box if you have a cat. Consider putting on calming music or sounds to help drown out some of the noises from the move. Most importantly, check on pets frequently to be sure they are calm and show them that you are there. If possible, wait to move your pet from your old residence until after the movers have left. While it will look empty and different, it will at least provide a quiet environment for you to gather some of your pet's items and begin travel to your new home.

Travel:

No matter the means of conveyance, traveling with a pet adds complexity. Be sure that you are prepared to ensure both safe and smooth travel for your companions. One way to provide your pet and yourself with a less stressful travel experience is to hire a professional pet mover. Professional pet movers are charged with getting your pet to your new location with the least amount of stress possible while freeing you from having to handle transport solely on your own. To find a professional pet moving company, visit the International Pet and Animal Moving Association's website at www.ipata.org.

Traveling by Plane:

If you are planning to fly with your pet be sure to book your flight early as pet approval is booked on a first-come, first-served basis. Check with your airline to see what they require from you as each airline has its own rules and regulations per pet transportation and pet insurance. These requirements may include paperwork, health records, and specific types of animal crates. Regardless of your takeoff time, feed your pet no less than 5-6 hours before your flight and be sure to provide water approximately two hours before your flight. Avoid layovers and fly direct if possible to avoid extra strain and extended travel time stressing your pet. When you fly with your pet, check with the airline to see if you can buy a ticket for them. Travelling in cargo can be stressful for your pet and if airline regulations permit, it can be worth it to spring for another ticket. Importantly, airlines have different policies on which pets are allowed in the cabin, often dependent on breed and size.

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Traveling by Car:

Before you decide to set out on the open road with your favorite pet pal, make sure you have them secured in a carrier. Even if you usually take them for quick trips in the car outside of a carrier, extended drive times may impact them differently than just a run to the store. Long drives can make animals uncomfortable and nervous. Even your usually calm companion may find themselves bolting for an open door or moving agitatedly throughout the vehicle if not crated. To avoid any messy car sickness, hold off on giving food or water to your pet right before your drive. Instead, bring a few treats along to give throughout drivetime and plan regular watering and walking stops along the way. It is also a good idea to bring water from home to avoid changes in water causing tummy troubles for your furry friend.

Hotels:

Research pet-friendly hotels along your route and decide in advance where you will be stopping for the night. Book your rooms ahead of time as pet-friendly rooms in hotels tend to go fast. Set aside your pet's favorite blanket, bed, and toys during the move and bring them along in the car. This will help them feel more comfortable and helps to ensure that you both can get a good night's rest while away from home.

Pet-Friendly Hotel Chains: Always call ahead to make sure the location you intend on staying at is pet friendly. Book your pet-friendly room well in advance of your travel date. Below is a list of hotel chains that have pet-friendly rooms at some or all of their locations. Some of them may even provide a little treat and some creature comforts for your pal.

- [La Quinta](#)
- [Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts](#)
- [Kimpton Hotels](#)
- [Best Western](#)
- [Ace Hotels](#)
- [Fairmont Hotels & Resorts](#)
- [Hotel Indigo](#)
- [Red Roof Inn](#)
- [Motel 6](#)
- [Choice Hotels](#)
- [DoubleTree by Hilton](#)
- [Extended Stay America](#)
- [Hampton Inn](#)
- [Home2Suites by Hilton](#)
- [Marriott](#)
- [The Peninsula Hotels](#)
- [The Ritz-Carlton](#)
- [Westin](#)



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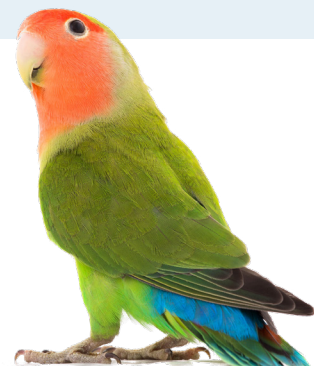
Animal-Specific Guide:

Just as every dog has his day, every animal has its own unique set of needs and requirements for transport. Below you will find information that is unique to moving more unusual types of pets. As stated above, all animals should be given a clean bill of health from a veterinarian prior to being transported. It is essential that all restrictions and guidelines of the various applicable governments and homeowner's associations for your new residence are checked thoroughly to ensure your pets are permitted. This is especially true for exotic pets such as fish, birds, and reptiles which if released even accidentally can negatively impact the local ecosystem. All pets, regardless of type should be seen by their veterinarian prior to the move to confirm that they are in good health. If your pet needs ongoing medications, secure a 30-day supply prior to leaving. You should always consult your veterinarian on the best ways to transport your animal depending on its species, breed, and your means of travel.

Birds:

Traveling with a feathered friend? Follow these tips to keep your bird calm, safe, and healthy during transport.

- If traveling by car, get your bird used to being in the car prior to your travel day.
- If you are driving a long distance, place your bird in a compact travel cage that will prevent them from moving around too much. Doing this will help minimize jostling or the bird being injured from sudden stops or bumps in the road.
- Remove perches or toys and place a small towel at the bottom of the cage for them to snuggle into.
- Drape the cage with a towel to provide darkness. Keeping out light is calming for birds. Secure the food and water bowls to the cage so that they cannot injure your bird and then fill them only halfway to prevent spills.
- Talk to your bird while you drive and plan to remove the outer towel when you stop for breaks. You can take the cage out of the car to allow your bird some fresh air and have a look around but leave the bird inside for the entirety of your trip.
- Check food and water levels and fill only to halfway until you arrive at your destination.
- The cage should be placed securely in your car so that it doesn't move. Try placing it in the footwell or securing it between heavy items.
- If you plan to fly with your bird, check with the airline ahead of time to make sure they allow birds onboard. Each airline has different pet policies. If your airline allows birds, make a reservation for yours in advance. Be sure to have your bird in an airline approved cage that will fit under the seat in front of you.²



¹ Tague, A. (2017, September 26). How to Transport a Pet Bird. Retrieved from <https://animals.mom.me/how-to-transport-a-pet-bird-12134259.html>

² Parode, N. (2019, June 26). Can You Bring Your Pet Bird on Your Flight? Retrieved from <https://www.tripsavvy.com/pet-birds-and-air-travel-2972592>

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Fish:

Safely moving fish can be tricky and requires several steps to be done correctly. It's ideal to wait to move your fish last so that they are not outside of their tanks unnecessarily. The best way to move your fish depends on the quantity and type of fish you have as well as how long you will be travelling. In advance of your move, consult your local fish store to find out the best way to transport your specific fish, tank, and accessories.

- If you plan to fly with pet fish, you should check with the [TSA](#) well ahead of time to get specifics on their policy. Currently, fish are allowed in carry on bags as long as they are in clear plastic containers with water. Fish and their containers are subject to inspection and approval by your TSA officer.³
- Be sure to follow [the appropriate setup steps](#) when you arrive in your new home.

Reptiles & Amphibians (non-venomous):

While it may seem harsh to ship your beloved lizards pal via parcel post, it's important to remember that this is the main way breeders transport reptiles and amphibians. This is one of the most cost-effective options for transporting reptiles and amphibians, especially if you plan on flying. Most airlines will not accept reptiles or amphibians into the cabin and will only allow them in cargo. Placing your pet in cargo is expensive and also stressful for them. There are also professional reptile and amphibian shipping companies who will handle the shipment for you at a nominal fee. If you choose to ship your pet on your own, contact your chosen carrier for specifications on weight limits, boxes, and temperature warnings.

Driving your reptile or amphibian in their container or another suitable container is also an option. If you choose to bring them along for your drive:

- Be sure you remove any features in their tank that could fall on them or cause injury.
- Be mindful of temperature in the vehicle and try to keep it comfortable for your specific type of amphibian or reptile.
- These animals are very sensitive to changes in their habitats and to temperature. Try to keep as much the same as it is at home for them as possible to avoid stress-induced health problems.
- Provide food and water if needed by your pet but be sure they are secured and cannot harm them during the drive.
- If your pet requires a moist environment, you will need a waterproof container so that you can line the bottom with moist towels without leaks or damage.⁴



³ (n.d.). Airline Forces Traveler to Leave Pet Fish at Airport. Retrieved from <https://www.travelpulse.com/news/airlines/airline-forces-traveler-to-leave-pet-fish-at-airport.html>

⁴ Ryan, J. (2016, October 25). Moving Cross Country With Exotic Pets. Retrieved from <https://www.mymovingreviews.com/move/moving-exotic-pets/>

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Mice, Rats, Hamsters, Guinea Pigs:

When transporting the smallest of our fuzzy friends, it is important to consult your vet for recommended precautions, preparations, and provisions. Here are some tips for how to safely travel with mice, rats, hamsters, and guinea pigs.

- If you plan on driving to your new home, choose a smallish container for your pets to avoid them sliding around and getting injured.
- Do not use shavings as these will move around too much during the drive. Instead, opt for a thick layer of newspaper or a waterproof sheet as the base. Place a soft towel over the newspaper or waterproof sheet for your pet's comfort.
- Make sure to provide food and water that is securely attached to the carrier to avoid potential messes or injuries. When using a water bottle, fill it to the brim and ensure the carrier is level to avoid leaks.
- Make sure your pet is secure in the carrier by placing it in the footwell between heavy objects to prevent sliding.
- If you plan to fly, most airlines will not permit these types of animals in the cabin and they will have to fly as "live cargo". Get detailed instructions on which type of carriers are approved by your airline and pick a sturdy one. Ensure that you label the carrier well so that whoever is handling your pet knows it is indeed a pet and which side is up. Provide water and food containers that are securely fastened to the carrier.⁵

References for Moving Other Types of Animals:

[Ferrets](#)

[Insects](#)

[Chickens](#)

[Horses](#)

[Livestock/Livestock State Requirements](#)

Once you safely arrive to your new home, be sure that you perform a thorough check of the property and identify any potential safety hazards before you let your pet roam free. Check that doors and windows close securely and block off any potential hiding places that may be dangerous for your pet. After you have completed checking for hazards and securing your new space, allow your pets to get acquainted with their new surroundings. Depending on the type of pet, remember that some animals are particularly sensitive to new smells, including animal smells that may still linger from the previous occupant. You may want to start acclimating your pets slowly by giving them one room to get familiar with at a time. Your pets may take up to a month to get truly comfortable in their new home and likely will require more attention, bathroom breaks, and care until they feel settled.

⁵(n.d.). Moving With Your Hamster? Tips for an Easier Trip. Retrieved from <https://www.movefla.com/moving-with-your-hamster-tips-for-an-easier-trip>

For more information visit: [northamerican.com](https://www.northamerican.com)

