

SAFE TRAVEL WITH YOUR PET

By Elizabeth Chandler

According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA), during a 30-mph car crash an unsecured 60-pound dog becomes a projectile that could hit a windshield, backseat, or its owner with the force of 1,200 pounds. For your pet's and your own safety, use a safety/restraint device for your pet when traveling in your car.

In addition to your pet becoming a high-speed projectile in the event of an accident and being thrown from the car, there are other risks to loose pets in cars. Air bag deployment can have a disastrous outcome to a loose pet; unrestrained animals (especially animals riding in their owner's laps) can cause serious accidents by distracting the driver; and allowing dogs to hang their heads out the window, while clearly a great pleasure to them, is risking debris being blown into their eyes or nose. The primary cause of death of animals in car accidents is entirely avoidable: dogs running free in the bed of pickup truck. You can safely transport your pet in the bed of a truck if you crate them and secure the crate with ropes or bungees.

There are many pet restraint devices available, able to accommodate all sizes and types of dogs and cats. For instance, a safety harness may work well for a dog that will stay in one place during travel, but a crate or dog car seat may work better for a dog or cat that likes to have a little mobility while in transit.

Holisticforpets.com offers a wide range of pet carriers, crates, pet car seats, and safety harnesses. They even have a cool tubular soft crate that looked so comfy, you may be tempted to crawl into it and take a nice, long nap.

If you are traveling long distances with your pet, here are some helpful tips:

- Accustom your pet to its new safety restraint or crate by taking it for a series of short trips before attempting a long trip.
- Before embarking on a long road trip, click on **petswelcome.com** to find hotels, motels, parks, and campgrounds that welcome pets. If you must leave an animal alone in a hotel room, crate your pet in the room, place the "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door, and inform the maid or front desk that the animal is in the room alone.
- Feed your pet the main meal of the day at the **end** of the day's travels, take along a jug of water and a water bowl to keep your pet hydrated while in transit, and try to stop every few hours to exercise for your pet, on leash of course (even if your pet is a cat).
- Be aware of the temperature where the animal is positioned in the vehicle to prevent overheating and/or dehydration. Direct sun might adversely affect your pet, particularly in the summer, even when the a/c is running. You may need to install sunshades on the side windows.
- Be sure to include your cell number on your pet's tags. Your home number won't be much help to someone who finds your pet while you're traveling.

You wear a seatbelt and you use a properly installed safety seat for your child or infant. It only makes sense that you would provide the same protection for your best friend. Take the time to secure your pet properly.