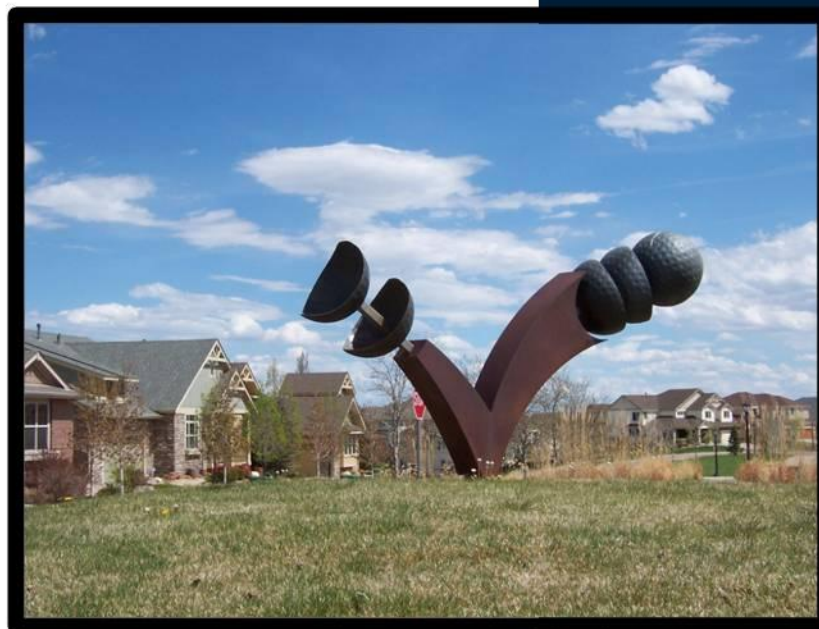


Moving your fur babies and other pets



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For More Info



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Air Force Retiree still Serving my Community

Pre-plan to move your pets safely

Review the key points to consider before purchasing a new home



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- You have ideas what would make a perfect home for you, but have you considered your pets?
 - Is there a large enough fenced yard or acreage for the pets or horses?
 - Is the house located too close to busy streets?
 - Are there dog parks, walking trails, or horse trails close enough?
 - Maybe consider including a utility room with a pet spa to bathe muddy dogs (maybe with an outside entrance) before granting them access to the rest of the house?
 - Are you planning on getting additional types of animals? If so, what about their creature comforts?
- You find a house and submit an offer, so what is your next step? Per your contract to buy and sell, you have a limited time to conduct "due diligence". This is when you should review everything concerning your pet situation. The first thing to do is find out the county, city/town, and HOA restrictions concerning animals. Some counties, cities, and HOAs limit the types, numbers, and breeds. Here in the Colorado region, there are places which will not allow pit bull dogs, wolf-hybrid breeds, swine (e.g., pet pot bellied pigs), or roosters.



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- HOAs pretty much self-rule the types of animals they are willing to have in their community. There is one rural HOA in my area which allows a maximum of two horses and two dogs, but no other type farm animals. My own HOA is pretty liberal and allows any type of animals except swine.
- Most counties have a maximum number of animals per acre or residence limitations.
- You will also need to find out licensing requirements for all your animals.
- Your REALTOR® should be able to help research restrictions, as well as check out the local community for pet friendly activities, parks, veterinarians, licensing fees/requirements, and locate the nearest emergency pet hospital in case of emergency.
- If you are moving from/to a foreign country, find out about animal restrictions, health documentation rules, and quarantine laws (some countries like the United Kingdom are six months long and are super expensive).



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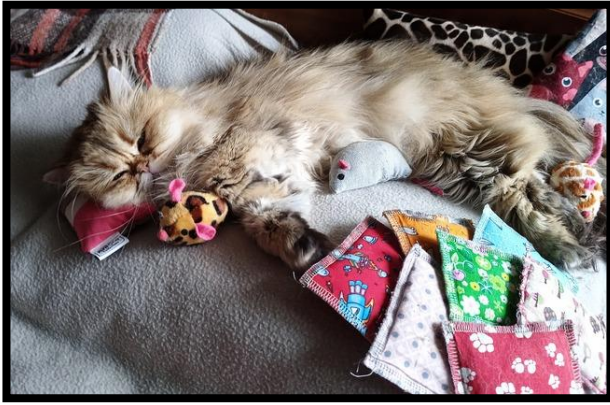


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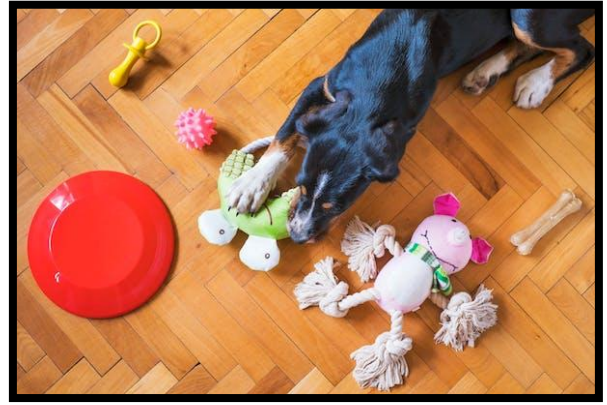


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Develop a pet move plan



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- Moving is the most stressful time for pets as their whole world is being turned upside down. Many pets may associate being in a car as a trip to the vet or being given away. My fur babies get anxious whenever suitcases came out. Remember not all pets are furry; include the feathered, finned, and scaly critters as well.
- Start work on your comprehensive moving plan for all your animals which will help reduce issues. Include water/feeding, potty breaks, and exercising. If traveling long distance or if heat may be an issue, driving non-stop or travel at night (no hotels) might be a better option. Plan what will go in the vehicle. When you load your pet and their items in the vehicle, you will find they take up more space than you realize. You want to do this before the moving truck leaves. Create a checklist: food, water, bowls, medication, toys, beds, collar/leash/tag, poop bags, and paper towels.
- If your pet has a favorite bed/blanket put this in their travel cage or on the seat in the car. Some references advise washing all the pet's items so they are nice and clean for the new home. But I disagree. Avoid washing your pet's belongings as these familiar scents will reduce stress during traveling, and help them feel more at home at the new place. You can wash items as needed once settled.
- A drastic change of food or water can upset some pet's systems, especially when undergoing stressful times. Take a supply of their normal pet food or ensure you can get the same brand in your new location. Now is not a good time to try new foods. Take as large of supply of water from your old house as possible, and slowly change over to the new water source. Especially if going from well to city water or vice versa.
- Ensure you make arrangements for a place to house all your animals until after closing. You cannot store animals on the new property until it is actually yours without permission. This could constitute trespassing with subsequent arrest, the animals could be impounded, and potentially kill the whole real estate deal.
- If flying, ensure you have individual travel kennels for each animal. Two pets cannot ride in the same container even if related. The only exception is newborns traveling with their mother - but the kennel needs to be large enough to accommodate them all. Ensure you travel with their rabies tags and medical documents (not packed in your moving boxes) in case something happens.
- Before traveling, update the contact information on your pet's ID tags (including new address), and considering getting/updating a microchip and GPS tracking tag as additional insurance.



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Preparing your animals for moving



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- Help your pets reduce anxiety by maintaining a normal routine. Stick as close as possible to your pet's regular feeding, walking, sleeping, attention, and playtime schedule to help reduce anxiety during the move. Moving can be extra anxious for older animals as their whole world is being turned upside down. Give them extra attention and be prepared to give high-strung pets vet-prescribed medications to reduce their anxiety.



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- If your pets rarely ride in the car, consider taking them for short rides each day to get them use to the long drive. If your pet is prone to car sickness, consider visiting your veterinarian a few weeks prior to the move to get car sickness pills, other medications, and feeding recommendations. This is a good time to have your old vet send copies of your pet's medical files to the new vet, and get you off the old vet's mailing list.
- If your pets haven't had much leash time, get them some training and time to get use to being on a lead. Cats can be trained to walk on a leash, although due to their physical differences from dogs, they can easily slip out of a standard collar and should be put in a halter. While in the military I moved across country many times. My cats generally never wanted to get out of the car. I tried putting them on leashes to get some exercise, but I only had one cat who ever relaxed enough to smell things and look around.
- Get animal carriers out a week or so before traveling allowing them to get use to them. Many pets associate these carriers with their annual trips to the vet.

Pack-up day and hitting the road



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- The most dangerous day for pets is during the craziness of moving day. Consider giving your pet a break at a pet sitter's home. Especially if you will have lots of strangers going in and out of the home. This will also reduce their anxiety and reduce the chance of a pet bolting out an open door. A cat's first reaction will to go under the house, up a tall tree, hide in furniture, partially packed boxes, or some other impossible to get to location. There have even been stories of cats hiding and getting shipped in boxes and furniture.
- Load your pet and all their supplies in the vehicle before the moving truck leaves. This will ensure you have all your pets accounted for, and ensure everything will fit in the car. As stated previously, you will find they take up more space than you realize. Pack your pet's items in the house last so they can be unpacked first.



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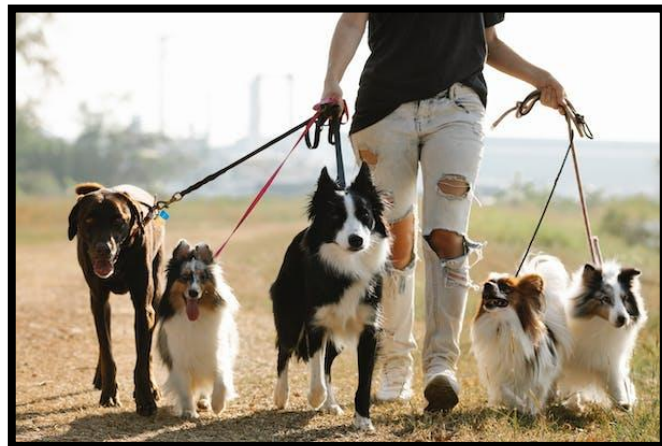


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- Listen to your pet. You know when your dog tells you it's time for a pit stop. It may take you a few minutes to find an exit or rest area. Stop regularly for potty breaks and water. Have a litter box ready for cats.
- Do not allow your pets to roam freely in your vehicle. They could make a quick move out the door anytime you open the door. Pets could get down under the drivers feet. There is nothing worse than stepping on the brake and hearing your pet yelping by getting pinned underneath, especially when you still need to stop.



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- Moving a horse will require you to have exercise/water plans, and if you are having a horse shipped with other horses, you will probably need a Coggins test ahead of time.
- If traveling with birds, rodents, fish, or reptiles, consider traveling at night as this could reduce their anxiety and be cooler. If hot weather is a consideration, you might place them in a well-ventilated cooler with some freezer blocks. The goal is not to let them get too hot or too cold, and to protect them from the dangerous sun shining in the windows. Check them often.



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Unpacking



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- You should unpack your pet's stuff first. Set up a secure location for your pet with food, water, litter boxes, and their favorite toys. Familiar smelling items will help reassure your pet in their new surroundings.
- Take extra precautions as most pets are lost within a couple of days of moving into a new home. Ensure the yard is escape proof. I found out my little dog could climb a 6-ft wooden gate, whereas not my old 4-ft chain link gate. Pet proof inside your new home and ensure the space is safe before allowing your pet to roam. Ensure any holes where your pets can go into to hide are plugged up. Don't allow them off leash or go outside un-chaperoned until you are sure they know which house is theirs. If startled by something unexpected or loud, they may react out of character. The stress of a move can cause even the most obedient dog to not listen to their owners. Cats will crawl into hard to reach locations/holes, under buildings, up trees, or even try to find their old home. Get a new pet license as soon as possible if required.



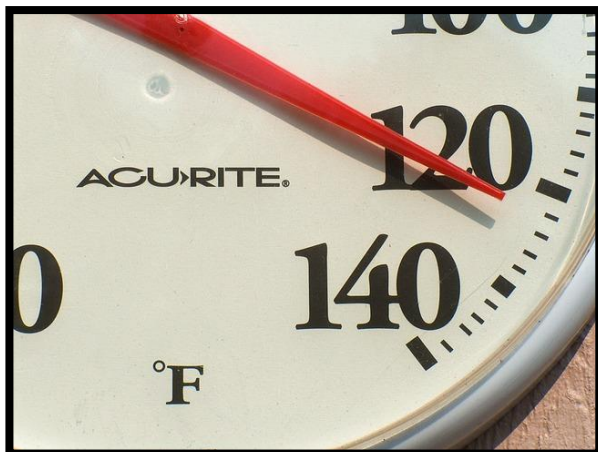
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Dangers while traveling

- Heat is a major threat for pets. Leaving animals in a vehicle while you are in a restaurant is a big no-no. The heat in a car can become deadly quickly. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association: *“The temperature inside your vehicle can rise almost 20° F in just 10 minutes, and almost 30° F in 20 minutes. The longer you wait, the higher it goes. At one hour, your vehicle's inside temperature can be more than 40° F higher than the outside temperature. Even on a 70° F day, that's 110° F inside your vehicle! Your vehicle can quickly reach a temperature that puts your pet at risk of serious illness and even death, even on a day that doesn't seem hot to you”.* And **“cracking the windows makes no difference”.** ^{xxxiv}
- Don't get arrested or ticketed for animal cruelty, or have to look for a window replacement due to some good Samaritan. As of Aug 2021, 29 states have laws which protect emergency responders (police officers and animal control) who try to save animals from hot vehicles from civil or criminal protection. 14 states also have laws on the books to provide private citizens ("Good Samaritans") civil or criminal protection for rescuing animals in imminent danger (Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Vermont and Wisconsin). ^{xxxv xxxvi}
- If traveling alone, keep your gas and pit stops as short as possible. Use fast food drive thru, and not sit down restaurants. Keep the engine and A/C running except when refueling. When parking always look for shade.
- Give all your animals a chance to drink while traveling if they want it. My dog would drink anytime something is offered, whereas my cats would normally not drink in the car, unless it was a really long trip. They preferred to wait till we were stopped for the day. Water should be cooled, but not chilled.
- Consider placing 12V or battery fans in the back of the vehicle to help keep pets cooled and the air moving.
- If possible do what you can to keep the sun from directly shining on pets, as long as you don't impair the driver's view. Animals carriers are great places to sleep and protect them from the sun.
- Depending on the heat, if you are traveling with small animals like birds, rodents, fish, or reptiles, you might place them in a ventilated cooler with some small freezer blocks. Be careful not to let them get too hot/cold.



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- Make sure pets are leashed at all times. The stress of a move can cause even the most obedient dog not to listen and possibly run away in unfamiliar surroundings. During one of my travels, I saw a family let their two Labradors off leash to get some exercise on what appeared to be a rural dirt road. The dogs were happy and excited to get out of the car and were acting like pups. They were running around, having a good time exploring, smelling all the interesting scents they could, and then they found a jack rabbit. If you have not experienced a jack rabbit, they will run a long ways before stopping. The jack rabbit took off down the dirt road with the labs chasing the rabbit, and the owners chasing the dogs. The jack rabbit was way ahead of the dogs, and the dogs were way ahead of the owners. I saw what had happen, drove down the road, picked up the husband, and drove about a mile to where the dogs were going in circles trying to pick up the scent of their lost rabbit. The man was able to get their attention and they came to him. The dogs were overjoyed with their run, whereas the husband and wife were not overjoyed.
- Be especially aware of heat when hauling any animals in a trailer as these are generally not air conditioned.

Traveling Stories – expect the unexpected

- I traveled extensively with my cat, who was named “Bug”. Her name was Bug because when she was a kitten, she was always hunting and eating them. She would snag Miller moths out of the air on the fly – yum.



Bah Hum-bug xxxix

- Bug would always get car sick 15 minutes after leaving the house on any length trip. She never got sick going to the vet, which was 25 minutes down the road. We could travel for weeks without an issue except after leaving the house on the first day. Bug always gave me a warning moan and I seemed to always pull over at the same place on the side of the road.
- I always allowed Bug to walk around free in the truck and enjoyed her attention. I always carefully looked for her when I got in or out of the truck, expecting her to jump out, which she never did. She regally laid on the top of the back seat of the truck, take naps on my lap, and sometimes go from window to window watching the world go by. She learned quickly she was not allowed on the floor by my legs.
- We traveled pulling an RV. Bug would typically not eat, drink water, or use the litter box in the truck during the day. I had a box prepared, but she always waited till she was in the RV, about a ½ hour after we stopped.



I almost did what? xl

- Bug and my personal danger story – The only issue we ever had traveling. We were on a multi lane road going through a small southern Colorado town. I found myself in the left turn lane, but I wanted to go straight and not turn. As I was in the process of changing lanes, I heard the noise of a semi truck getting louder and louder very quickly. I was looking all around to see where the truck was, and I finally figure out the noise was from the semi rig sitting behind me. It turned out my cat Bug had stepped on the passenger window control down button as I turned. As the window was going down, the truck sound got louder. She was calmly standing on the arm rest and window controls with her rear legs, and her head and front legs outside of the vehicle enjoying the view. Being alone in wide pickup truck, which was in gear, and me being seat-belted, I could not just reach over and grab her. Using my driver window controls, I raised the window till it uncomfortably touched her belly. It was “touch and go” for a second for her to decide which direction she would go, but she finally did step back inside. It was at this point I could grab her and raise the window. To say the least, I was so relieved. Due to her health, this was unfortunately one of her last trips with me.

