

## PURPOSE

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To ensure the safe, comfortable, and calm transport of all dogs using evidence-based enrichment, environmental supports, and behavioral support.

## PRE-TRANSPORT MEDICATION

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">BEST PRACTICE</p>	<p>Veterinarian-prescribed anxiety-relieving medications should be administered to all dogs approximately 2 hours prior to loading, unless deemed medically contraindicated.</p> <p>Staff must document administration time and dosage in a transport log.</p> <p>Dogs should be monitored for any adverse reactions before loading.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">NEXT BEST</p>	<p>If access to prescription medication is limited, over-the-counter calming supplements containing L-theanine, alpha-casozepine, and/or magnolia and phellodendron can be given instead</p> <p>Supplements should be given the night before and the morning of transport to promote calmness.</p> <p>Document supplement type and administration time in the log.</p> <p>Observe dogs for tolerance prior to loading.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">MINIMUM STANDARD</p>	<p>If giving calming supplements is not feasible, organizations should carefully select dogs who are emotionally and behaviorally stable enough to tolerate transport-related stress.</p> <p>Only dogs showing low to moderate arousal under handling should be scheduled for transport.</p>

## TRANSPORT CRATE GUIDELINES

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>BEST PRACTICE</b></p>	<p>All dogs must be transported in sturdy, airline-style crates sized to allow standing, turning, and lying comfortably.</p> <p>Crates must be secured with zip ties and labeled clearly with dog ID, destination, and emergency contact information (as applicable).</p> <p>No wire or soft-sided crates are permitted.</p> <p>No stacking crates directly on top of each other.</p> <p>If multiple tiers are necessary, use built-in, reinforced shelving to support each crate securely.</p> <p>Crate floors should be lined with an absorbent pad and soft bedding for comfort and hygiene.</p> <p>Individual crates are standard, with the exception of small littermate puppies (&lt;5.0 kg), which may share a crate (2-3 max) for comfort and social support.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>NEXT BEST</b></p>	<p>All dogs must be transported in individual crates, with the exception of small littermate puppies (&lt;5.0kg) and be sized appropriately to allow standing, turning, and lying comfortably.</p> <p>Metal wire crates may be used if they are free from rust and the plastic tray is intact.</p> <p>Metal crates should not be stacked due to instability, noise, and collapse risk.</p> <p>If life-saving urgency requires crate stacking, only plastic airline-style crates may be used and must be securely anchored to prevent shifting.</p> <p>Crates should be appropriately sized, secured with straps or bungees, and labeled with dog ID and destination (as applicable).</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>MINIMUM STANDARD</b></p>	<p>All dogs must be transported in individual crates, with the exception of small littermate puppies (&lt;5.0kg) and be sized appropriately to allow standing, turning, and lying comfortably.</p> <p>Metal wire crates may be used if they are free from rust and the plastic tray is intact.</p> <p>Metal crates should not be stacked due to instability, noise, and collapse risk.</p> <p>If life-saving urgency requires crate stacking, only plastic airline-style crates may be used on the bottom tier, use of wire crates is kept to a minimum and reserved only for the top tier.</p> <p>All crates must be securely anchored to prevent shifting.</p> <p>Crates should be appropriately sized and labeled with dog ID and destination (as applicable).</p>

## VEHICLE ENVIRONMENT

**BEST  
PRAC  
TICE**

Use a temperature-controlled van, maintaining an ambient temperature of 68–72°F.  
Play calming classical music through a portable speaker system during transport.

**NEXT  
BEST**

If a temperature-controlled van is unavailable, provide 6-inch stainless steel bowls pre-frozen with water in each dog's crate when outside temperature is above 65°F.  
Use small battery-powered fans to increase airflow.  
Sheets may need to be removed or partially opened to maintain airflow and prevent overheating.  
If a portable speaker isn't feasible or a classical station isn't within range, other calm genres (e.g., country, jazz, or instrumental) may be used.  
Avoid heavy metal or rock music when dogs are in the vehicle.

**MINIMUM  
STANDARD**

When music is not available, maintain a quiet, low-stress auditory environment:

- Human conversation or talk radio should be kept below 80 decibels.
- If possible, minimize talking to reduce stimulation.

Ventilation must ensure fresh airflow and prevent heat buildup.

## HANDLING, LOADING, AND UNLOADING

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>BEST PRACTICE</b></p>	<p>Dogs should be calmly and quietly loaded, avoiding rushed movements or loud noises.</p> <p>Dogs are loaded in order of crate placement to minimize backtracking and commotion.</p> <p>Staff must continuously monitor dogs during loading to ensure safety and comfort.</p> <p>Use stress-minimizing handling techniques and verbal reassurance as appropriate.</p> <p>Upon arrival, dogs are unloaded in reverse order to reduce traffic and confusion.</p> <p>A quiet staging area should be prepared before arrival.</p> <p>Staff should record each dog's arrival condition, including stress level, signs of illness, or any injury noted upon unloading.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>NEXT BEST</b></p>	<p>When limited staff or resources are available, maintain a quiet, deliberate pace and avoid crowding the loading area.</p> <p>Staff should communicate softly and coordinate movements to minimize startle responses.</p> <p>Staff should record each dog's arrival condition, including stress level, signs of illness, or any injury noted upon unloading.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>MINIMUM STANDARD</b></p>	<p>When limited staff or resources are available, maintain a quiet, deliberate pace and avoid crowding the loading area.</p> <p>Staff should communicate softly and coordinate movements to minimize startle responses.</p> <p>Staff should record each dog's arrival condition, including stress level, signs of illness, or any injury noted upon unloading.</p>

## TRANSPORT DURATION, STAFFING & REST PERIODS

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>BEST PRACTICE</b></p>	<p>Transport should be limited to 8 hours per day.</p> <p>Trips longer than 4 hours must have a driver and at least one additional volunteer/handler to assist with a scheduled break for elimination, water, and cleanup of any urine, feces, or vomitus.</p> <p>Trips exceeding 8 hours should be scheduled over multiple days to allow each dog to be walked, fed, and rested in darkness and quiet for at least 8 consecutive hours.</p> <p>All breaks and care activities must be documented in the transport log with time, location, and observations.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>NEXT BEST</b></p>	<p>For transports without overnight capability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park the vehicle in a shaded area during rest breaks</li> <li>• Visually inspect each crate, offer fresh water, and spot clean after 4 hours and as needed.</li> </ul> <p>For trips longer than 8 hours, plan breaks for spot checks approximately every 4 hours, with a more extended exercise, elimination, and cleanup break at the 8-hour point.</p> <p>Travel may continue after the extended break if drivers are rotated and the transport area remains quiet and dark during evening hours.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>MINIMUM STANDARD</b></p>	<p>For transports without overnight capability and/or additional personnel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park the vehicle in a shaded area during rest breaks.</li> <li>• Visually inspect each crate, offer fresh water, and spot clean after 4 hours and as needed.</li> <li>• For trips longer than 8 hours, plan breaks for spot checks approximately every 4 hours, with a more extended exercise, elimination, and cleanup break at the 8-hour point.</li> <li>• Travel may continue after the extended break if drivers are rotated and the transport area remains quiet and dark during evening hours.</li> </ul> <p>Driver fatigue must be avoided through rotation or rest stops to ensure animal and human safety.</p>