

# PET FLIGHT SAFETY CHECKLIST

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## BEFORE YOU GO TO THE AIRPORT

- BOOK YOUR PET** on your flight by *speaking directly with a person at the airline*. No U.S. domestic carrier allows online booking of pets. Clarify whether your pet will be flying in-cabin with you or as checked baggage/cargo.
- CAREFULLY INSPECT THE CARRIER/CRATE**. Check all zippers, seams, locks, screws and connections. If there are *any* structural problems, purchase a new crate or carrier before flying.
- NEVER SEDATE** an animal prior to a flight! Even the healthiest of animals become ill or even die due to being sedated and the stress of flying (being crated, noise of the plane, temperature and cargo pressure).

### **IF YOUR PET WILL BE FLYING AS CHECKED BAGGAGE OR CARGO**

- FLY NON-STOP TO YOUR DESTINATION**, if at all possible.
- PURCHASE ZIP TIES** online or at your local hardware store (approximately \$5.00 US for 100). Pack them so they will be readily accessible at the airport.
- DRILL HOLES** at the top, bottom and both sides around the door of the crate. This will allow you to add the zip ties **AFTER** the Transportation Security Administration's inspection of the crate.
- POST YOUR CELL PHONE NUMBER ON ALL SIDES OF THE CRATE**, with instructions (in English and Spanish) to contact you immediately if needed for the handling of your pet.
- Post a sign that says "**DO NOT OPEN EXCEPT IN EMERGENCY & ONLY IN AN ENCLOSED ROOM**" on top of the crate, above the door. (Include Spanish translation as well.)

## AT THE AIRPORT – CHECKING IN

- REQUIRE THAT TSA SCREENING BE DONE INSIDE A SECURE ENCLOSED ROOM**. When checking in, have the ticket agent call a TSA agent over or ask where to take the crate to a TSA security station for inspection to be done before handing your pet over to the airline for travel.
- After TSA inspects the crate they will place a Homeland Security tag on the carrier or crate.

### **IF YOUR PET WILL BE FLYING AS CHECKED BAGGAGE OR CARGO**

- APPLY ZIP TIES** to the door and sides of the crate to further secure your pet after the TSA inspection.
- ASK THE AIRLINE PERSONNEL TO IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY YOU** if any additional security checks are needed. Be aware that **MULTIPLE LAYERS OF SECURITY CHECKS MAY BE PERFORMED WHILE HANDLING YOUR PET DURING AND AFTER CHECK-IN AT YOUR AIRLINES**.
- REQUIRE** that your pet NOT be transported on a tug to the aircraft.
- REMIND** the airline personnel that **IT IS AGAINST USDA & DOT REGULATIONS FOR CRATES TO BE STACKED ON TOP OF EACH OTHER**. Fines for violation can be up to \$100,000.)
- ASK** where your pet will be kept until loaded.

## AT THE AIRPORT – AT THE GATE

- If your pet is travelling in the cabin, **KEEP THE CARRIER SECURELY CLOSED**. Do not risk losing your pet now!

### **IF YOUR PET WILL BE FLYING AS CHECKED BAGGAGE OR CARGO**

- GO TO YOUR GATE AND WATCH THE CRATE BEING LOADED**. USDA regulations state that pets are last to load and first off the plane.
- TELL THE GATE AGENT YOU ARE WAITING** for your pet to be loaded before you board the plane.
- ASK TO SPEAK TO THE CAPTAIN** when you board the plane. Confirm that your pet has been safely loaded (describe the crate). Ask him or her to be aware of your pet when adjusting the heat and cooling in the cargo hold
- KEEP YOUR CELL PHONE ON** until the very last minute.

## AT THE DESTINATION AIRPORT

- UPON ARRIVAL, MAKE SURE YOUR PET'S CRATE** was taken off the plane.
- DO NOT REMOVE YOUR PET FROM THE CARRIER** until you are in a secure location.

## **DON'T BE SHY.**

Ask questions. Make people aware. Be assertive but polite.

Take whatever steps necessary to insure your pets are handled respectfully and safely.

Your knowledge and involvement can mean a world of difference in the safe handling of your pets!!!