

Pets and Travel / What to Know Before You Go

PETS & TRAVEL: WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



LIVE WELL UTAH

You're ready for a summer vacation, but what about your pets? Check out these expert tips from USU School of Veterinary Medicine faculty.

Summer is here and people are getting ready to hit the road on much-needed vacations. Pets are often considered to be part of the family, so it's no surprise many people want to bring their furry friend with them during their travels. Karl Hoopes and Allison Willoughby, faculty in Utah State University's School of Veterinary Medicine, have some advice for pet owners when it comes to traveling with their animals during the summer.

Both Hoopes and Willoughby, advisor to USU's Small Animal Specialty Club, agree that one of the most important things owners can do before leaving on a trip is to plan ahead and be aware of the laws at their destinations before they travel. Doing so will make the whole experience more enjoyable for everyone.

"Planning ahead is a must," Willoughby said. "Keep in mind the activities you are going to be doing and make sure animals are allowed. For example, many national parks allow pets in the car but not on the trail, so you need to check ahead of time."

It is important to remember that when traveling with pets even the smallest tasks, such as going out to eat or shopping, can become inconvenient and create a problem when pets aren't allowed in those establishments.

"Traveling with pets can be great for the pet and for people as long as you are prepared for some minor inconveniences," Willoughby said. "If the whole family works together it can be great."

Some paperwork also needs to be completed before you hit the road. Most states require a Certificate of Veterinary

Inspection (CVI) along with a rabies certificate when crossing state lines. This paperwork is also required when crossing the border into Canada or Mexico. There is always the chance pets will run off in unfamiliar places, so updating their licensing and microchip before leaving is crucial.

Pets can also become more susceptible to illness when traveling. To reduce the risk of pets becoming sick or contracting diseases, Hoopes recommended that all core vaccines be up to date. These vaccines include Bordetella (kennel cough), parvovirus, distemper and adenovirus. If traveling to areas where fleas are present, a flea preventative should be started immediately so that pets don't pick-up any unwanted creatures.

Hoopes also said it's a good idea to have the contact information for veterinarians in areas you'll be visiting saved in a phone so they are already on hand and ready to go.

"You never know if you will have internet service, so it is helpful to already have those numbers with you and in your phone," Hoopes said. "If an accident happens, you don't want to spend valuable time looking for numbers. If you already have numbers and addresses, you can take your animals to the clinic immediately."

On the Road

Beyond the basics of stopping often to let pets go to the bathroom and not leaving them in cars that heat up dangerously fast, Hoopes said one of the biggest problems he sees when traveling with pets in the car is dehydration.

"One of the biggest things is to make sure they don't get dehydrated. They need water just as often, or even more often, than we do," Hoopes said. "If it is really hot, dogs love to jump in the water. They love to swim and it really seems to help them."

Packing water from home can also reduce dehydration risk. Many dogs are simply used to the water they drink at home and refuse to drink anything else. Bringing water from home or packing bottled water is an easy solution to ensure pets stay healthy and hydrated for the duration of the vacation.

Hoopes and Willoughby also recommend that pet owners pack the food their pets are used to eating at home. Any sudden changes to pet's diet, like a new type of dog food, can have a negative impact and lead to sickness and gastrointestinal problems.

When traveling, pets are placed in new and stressful situations, so it is common for them to have anxiety when traveling. To reduce anxiety, a sedative can be purchased from local veterinarian.

Traveling by Air

Airlines are very particular when it comes to pets as passengers. When traveling by air, pets are typically carried in cargo instead of the passenger cabin. Hoopes said cargo does a good job at taking care of animals, but it is still important to remember that travel always adds additional stress.

"The dog or cat is in a carrier for an extended period of time without interaction. It is stressful and it can be scary," Hoopes said. "If you do put them in cargo, putting them with a blanket or stuffed toy they are familiar with can help reduce stress."

Pets traveling by air also require a CVI, and it usually the certificate must have been issued within 72 hours before traveling. Some airlines also require an acclimation statement be included with the certificate. This statement provides the airline with information about the temperature range the animal is acclimated to so that he can be safely transported

in cargo. The statement is issued by a veterinarian and must include the temperature range and time frame that is safe for the pet to remain in those temperatures.

Different airlines have different requirements, so it is important to understand what they are beforehand so there are no surprises when it comes time to depart. Owners should ask their veterinarians to call the airline they'll be flying with ahead of time to make sure they are prepared to properly take care of animals.

Extra precautions must be taken for airline travel with puppies.

"I hate to send puppies are under 12 weeks old on an airline because it gets really difficult," Hoopes said. "Make sure they are old enough to travel and that they have been away from their mother long enough to be fully weaned. You don't want them to be going through the stress of being weaned along with that of traveling."

Leaving Pets at Home

Traveling with pets can be a great experience, but what should be done when taking them isn't an option? Should pets be left at home or should they be taken to a kennel? While there are many pros and cons to both options, Hoopes and Willoughby said keeping animals at home with a caregiver is the most ideal.

"The best thing, in my opinion, is to have a dog sitter who will come to your house and take care of them in their own environment," Hoopes said. "It's ideal that they stay in their same bed with the same water and food and you just have someone come over to help take care of them."

Of course, there are still some cases when boarding pets at a kennel is the best option.

"Escape artists might be better in a kennel if you think your

dog will run out on your sitter,” Willoughby said. “If your dog sitter won’t be able to be there as much as you typically are and your dog is used to relieving himself several times a day, then a kennel would be preferred. If there are complicated medications to be given, then it would be better to give the kennel the medications unless the sitter is very experienced.”

When it comes to choosing a place to board your pet, it is important to visit kennels ahead of time and think about what each one has to offer in terms of safety, cleanliness and pet care. Hoopes said it is especially important for kennels to offer turnout time as well as individual and group housing options. It needs to be temperature controlled and the kennel should be willing to provide references when asked.

One problem with kennels is it is a place where diseases are often transmitted. Kennel cough is especially common, so pets need to have received the vaccine at least 2-3 weeks ahead of a kennel stay to build up sufficient immunity. Willoughby said this vaccine isn’t long lasting, so it is important to keep it updated. If vaccinated in the spring, immunity should last until the end of summer. Willoughby also recommended that puppies should never be boarded until the entire series of puppy shots is completed because of the risk of infection.

Whenever pets are left home alone, there is always a chance of them developing separation anxiety. Symptoms of separation anxiety include barking and howling, chewing, digging and other destructive behaviors, even if they don’t typically do those things.

“It’s all about fear of the unknown,” Hoopes said. “To reduce this anxiety, get the dog outside and keep the routine the same. Have someone they know coming to take of them and take them for walks.”

Traveling with pets can be a great experience for everyone

involved if done correctly. Just remember that for some pets, vacationing may not be their favorite thing.

“Traveling with pets is great. They are a part of the family and it can really add to your vacation,” Hoopes said. “Pets usually do enjoy it, but it is also very individual to the animal. Some pets like it, others don’t. If they don’t like it or won’t handle it well, don’t put them through it.”

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Pet Safety for the Fourth of July

A black and white dog, possibly a Border Collie, is running through a lush green grassy field. The dog is holding a small American flag in its mouth by the pole. The background is a soft-focus view of trees with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a bokeh effect. The overall mood is festive and patriotic.

LIVE WELL UTAH

FOURTH OF JULY
PET SAFETY

Worried about how your pets will react to the sight and sound of fireworks? Try these tips to keep them safe and calm.

No Fourth of July would be complete without a fireworks display. But pets often don't find the noise, blasts and flashing lights associated with fireworks fun or entertaining. With fireworks going off in Utah throughout the month of July, pets are bound to get stressed and anxious. Karl Hoopes and Allison Willoughby, faculty in the Utah State University School of Veterinary Medicine, shared tips to help owners keep their pets safe and make the summer more enjoyable for everyone.

Both Hoopes and Willoughby emphasized the importance of keeping pets in an area they are familiar with and where they can't hear the fireworks.

"If your dog is mildly nervous, just keeping them in a safe area is easiest and safest," Willoughby said. "Feeling 'safe' to your dog may be a cool basement or lower level family room with a fan blowing to dampen the noise."

Hoopes said the shelter needs to be indoors where sound can be better controlled and pets can't escape. Playing soft music or leaving the TV on can also keep them distracted and drown out the noise of the fireworks.

Special clothing, such as anxiety jackets or vests, can also be helpful in keeping animals calm. Willoughby said these jackets basically give the dog a hug by applying constant

pressure, which makes them feel safer.

While dogs are usually more comfortable when their owners are nearby, giving them too much reassurance can actually have the opposite effect and make them more nervous instead of calm.

“Dogs can feel more anxious if you are telling them over and over again they are going to be okay,” Willoughby said. “They can sense your own anxiety. Try to project confidence to your dog and give them the most attention when he is calm and confident.”

Prescription medications can also be useful when it comes to helping pets feel safe. If a dog has high anxiety levels, Hoopes advised owners to plan ahead and contact their veterinarian to get a safe sedative to keep them calm.

“Every year from the Fourth of July to the 24th, people get sedatives for their dogs because they know this time period is going to be hard on them,” Hoopes said. “All they do is give them the sedative pill and let them go to sleep.”

Herbal supplements can also be beneficial in treating milder cases of anxiety. Willoughby said these supplements are available over-the-counter from pet stores or veterinarians and are safe to give over long periods of time.

Willoughby warned that people should never give prescriptions designed for humans to their pets and recommended that pet

owners visit their veterinarians to find out what medication will work best for their pets.

“Don’t use human prescriptions on your animals. Some may be toxic and the dosages are different for your pets,” Willoughby said. “Your veterinarian will carefully calculate correct dosages based on your pet’s species and weight. Also, your veterinarian will know any preexisting conditions that might not allow your pet to take certain medications.”

Willoughby had some advice for cat owners as well.

“I recommend you keep your cat indoors. They are pretty good about finding a spot where they feel secure,” she said. “If they are hiding out a lot, just make sure they have access to their litter box, food and water and somewhere they can visit without feeling too vulnerable”

Even after taking all of these precautions, sometimes pets still escape. Before attending any activity or celebration, pet owners should make sure their animal’s microchip and license is up-to-date to avoid losing their furry friends.

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7 Tips for Pet Safety During Fireworks Season



While fireworks are beautiful and spectacular, loud fireworks can severely frighten pets. Keep them safe with these seven tips!

Don't Forget About Balto!

Fireworks are an exciting way to celebrate during the summer, but loud fireworks displays are no fun for many pets.

Kerry Rood, USU Extension veterinary sciences specialist, said pets' responses to loud noises can range from mild nervousness

to more aggressive behaviors like barking, chewing on furniture, digging, chewing on fencing or running away. This can lead to your pets hurting themselves or destroying property. Noisy thunderstorms can also frighten pets.

If you are worried about noise bothering your pet, here are seven useful tips to help keep your pet safe and calm.

1. Make sure your pet gets plenty of exercise during the day.

Pets are more likely to stay calm if they've already used up a lot of energy.

2. Create a safe place for your pet. Arrange to keep your pet somewhere dark and quiet. "House the pet deep inside the home where there is the least amount of noise," Rood said. "Sometimes a basement bathroom or bedroom will suffice."

3. Try not to leave your pet alone. Being alone will add to his or her fear and increase the likelihood of running away.

4. Distract your pet with an activity that captures their attention. Try to interest them in a favorite toy or game.

5. If your pet does start acting out, don't yell or scold them. "Stay calm yourself and do not become agitated, as this fuels your pet's reaction," Rood said.

6. Make sure your pet has a collar with clearly marked ID tags. According to Pet Amber Alert, animal control services report a 30% increase in lost pets between July 4 and July 6. If you do lose a pet, contact your local animal control dispatch.

7. If your pet has extreme reactions to noise, ask a veterinarian for help. There are medications that will help calm a pet's nerves.

Using these tips won't stop the fireworks, but can make the holidays less stressful for you and your pets.

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