



## MOVING HOUSE WITH PETS

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### PLANNING

As a pet owner, when faced with a relocation, it's important you plan ahead. Shifting house is an enormous change and often a very stressful time for our pets. Fortunately, there's plenty of things you can do to help minimise the stress on your beloved animals.

To safely transport your pet from one place to another, it's wise to buy or borrow a high quality pet carrier. During this stressful time, accidents do happen. It's not uncommon for small animals to hide under a vehicle brake pedal.

If your pet is not familiar with a pet carrier, encourage him to use it before moving day. A cat's natural curiosity works in your favour here, as they're always keen to check out new things. Let your moggy quietly explore the cage, while leaving the door open. Once he's checked the unfamiliar smells and exits freely, there'll be less stress the next time.

Moving pet fish can be a difficult task. Never attempt to lift a glass tank filled with water or the bottom will drop out! We recommend seeking advice from your pet store about moving your specific type of fish, especially if they're tropical. Usually, plastic bags with non-chlorinated water, pumped with air, will work – but it's best to only leave them in a bag for a short time and be careful to avoid road bumps as much as possible, as this can cause your fish to become ill from stress.

To be extra prepared, why not pack a pet travel kit! Include food, water, feeding dishes, a can opener (if needed), a leash, a few treats, a favourite toy and some type of bedding – don't forget a scooper and plastic bags for clean up!

After a house shift, it's common for pets who are in unfamiliar territory to go wandering. As soon as you know your new address, organise a pet ID tag quick smart! Ensure your tag includes your new address and telephone number(s). We suggest you might like to also ask your vet to microchip your cat or dog. If your animal is already micro-chipped, remember to notify the vet of your change of address and phone number so they can update their database.

### REMOVAL TRANSPORTATION

On moving day, to prevent any car sickness, it's best not to feed your pet for at least three hours prior to their journey.



Fortunately, there's lots of little things you can do to help bring your pet comfort for the car ride ahead. Try placing a piece of cloth, with your scent, nearby to relax your pet. If your animal has quite a sensitive nature, it may be worthwhile to talk with your vet about a mild sedative, which is often helpful.

In warm weather especially, it's vital that you never leave your pet alone in a vehicle, as the temperature can rise quickly, which can be harmful or, in some cases, fatal. If you're transporting birds or other small pets, such as guinea pigs or rabbits, cover their cage with a cloth. Keep in mind that birds are very sensitive to sudden changes in temperature.

Remember the essentials for your pet - food, water, a leash and some towels to keep your car clean.

During the car ride to your new home, remember to give your pet fresh water at every stop – especially smaller pets, which dehydrate very quickly in warmer weather or when stressed. If you stop for a break along the way, it's beneficial to take your dog for a short walk. If you're transporting a cat, remember to keep them in the car, as there's a higher chance they'll try to escape and, if frightened, may be impossible to catch.

Don't forget essentials such as food, water, a leash and a newspaper for keeping your car clean.

Once you've arrived at your new home, place your pet in a safe and quiet place they can't escape, such as the bathroom. Be sure to place a 'Do Not Enter' sign on the door as a reminder to everyone in your home.

### **ONCE YOU'VE MOVED**

At the same time you're settling into your new home, your dog will be busy exploring his environment and adjusting to his new territory. At this time, there's a higher chance your dog could stray. If you're moving districts, be sure to check with your local authority to see whether your dog's registration information needs updating. In the event that your dog does wander off and is brought into the pound, he will be easily identifiable if his registration information is current. In order to keep your dog as safe as possible, it's also worthwhile ensuring your fence lines and gates are dog-proof.

For the first fortnight, it's wise to keep your cat indoors as much as possible so he can adjust to his new environment. Remember, your cat not only has to make the new house his home but he also has to convince the neighbouring animals he has a right to the territory.

Prepare your new home as best you can. Ensure you have everything your pets will need on hand – food, water, medications, bedding, a litter box, water bowls and health records. Consider introducing yourself and your dog to the neighbours – they'll be considerably more sympathetic if your pooch has some adjustment issues, such as barking at night time.



Remember, in order to provide continuity and familiarity, it's important to maintain your pet's normal routines as much as you can. It's also helpful to provide small, frequent meals at the same location every day.

### **LETTING YOUR CAT OUTSIDE**

Before letting your cat outdoors for the first time, make sure he has some form of identification, such as a collar (with a quick release section to avoid getting caught up), which includes his name, address and current phone number. It's also important to ensure your cat's vaccinations are up to date.

If you see any cats in your garden, be sure to chase them away. Your cat will need all the help he can get to establish territory as 'the new cat on the block'.

Initially, introduce your cat outside gradually by opening the door and walking into the garden, and while doing so, encourage him to follow. There's a chance your cat, being nervous and unsure of his new surroundings, may become easily startled at something outside. It's often useful to keep a door to the house open for this purpose.

Cats, who are used to living outdoors, generally cope better with change than indoor cats, who may need a little extra time to adapt to their new environment. If you have a cautious cat, it's best you accompany him outside until he builds up his confidence in his new area.

Once your cat has settled in, for ease of access to the outdoors, it's beneficial to consider fitting a cat flap. Remember to make sure it's an electronically or magnetically controlled exclusive entry system, as these options will prevent strange cats invading your home.

