

By Amity K. Moore
Photos by Dale Spartas

Traveling Companions

Make traveling with your dog easier and more efficient

Summer heralds dog handlers' and trainers' busiest season. The bulk of field test competitions take place from June through August, and events are held across the United States and in Canada. Thus, you and your canine companion may often travel distances that require more than one bathroom stop. A journey with your dog can be rife with challenges, especially when you consider the recent onslaught and proliferation of diseases and upgraded security measures imposed at both our state and national borders. So, the staff at *NAHRA News* has researched the various modes of transportation with the intent of making the whole experience more comfortable—for the dog and its owner.

One of the common denominators when traveling across any border or state line is paperwork. Nearly every state and Canada requires something. Primarily, security officials are looking to prevent a rabies outbreak, so a health certificate from a certified veterinarian and documentation of a current rabies vaccination are the most commonly required documents. To enter Canada, the document must identify the animal in

terms of its breed, color, weight, age, sex and special markings. The trade name of the rabies vaccine as well as serial number and duration of validity must be noted as well. Although it is unlikely that a dog coming from the United States would require an inspection to cross the border, such an inspection is possible. Current fees, payable upon inspection, are \$30, plus tax, for the first dog, and \$5, plus tax, for each additional one.

Traveling from state to state requires similar documentation. Every state except Texas requires an interstate health certificate. All states require documentation of a current rabies vaccination for animals that are coming from rabies-free areas. Those wanting to enter from quarantined areas are subject to the discretion of the state veterinarian's office at the point of destination. (You can find phone numbers and other contact information for each of the 50 state's veterinarian offices by visiting www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/sregs). You'll be safe if your dog's health certificate is good for 30 days and has been signed by a licensed veterinarian within seven days of entry. It should communicate the

point of origin, point of destination, name and address of owner, sex, breed, weight, age and significant markings of the dog you're planning to transport, as well as that the dog hasn't been exposed to nor is carrying any communicable disease.

As for rabies vaccinations, there are two kinds. One is good for a year; the other for three. Every state accepts the annual vaccine. Some states accept the three-year as well. Please check the aforementioned website to verify which states accept the three-year vaccine if that is the method you use for your dog.

In addition to these two fundamentals, some states have additional requirements. For example, Alabama will not accept a dog if screwworms are present.

Hawaii has a slew of regulations and may even require a 30- or 120-day quarantine of your dog. Essentially, your dog must be free of any external or internal parasite for the past 14 days, and you should have the documentation to prove it. Hawaii also requires a microchip to be implanted in any dog at least three months prior to entering the state. The microchip number must be provided to the state veterinary office before the pet's arrival as well.

To visit Indiana, you must not only carry a health certificate with you, but you must forward an approved copy of the health certificate to the Indiana state veterinarian within 10



Shara Espinoza

Dog trucks (ABOVE) provide a safe ride for your pooch, as well as give ample storage for all your competition and training tools. On the road, it's a good idea to have a collar and leash available. Crates should be big enough to allow the dog to sit, (BELOW) lie down and stand comfortably.

days after the date of issue by the state veterinarian in the state of the dog's origin.

Maine requires that the health certificate specifically say "During the previous 21 days, the animal has not been in any state where a premises is under quarantine for vesicular stomatis on that date."

New Hampshire requests that dogs have been inoculated against common canine viruses within the past year, but not less than seven days.

Even airline companies require health certificates to transport dogs. (See the table on page 9 to get the details on specific airlines). This policy ensures that the airlines are meeting state animal transport regulations, plus they're looking after the health and welfare of other passengers and




their personnel. Still, plane travel has a bad rap. It's usually the most stressful form of travel for your dog, and it requires a lot of planning. Some airlines have made pet travel part of their marketing draw, using individual pet reservations and relatively inexpensive pet fares as enticements. Others, however, provide pet transportation merely as a matter of customer service and slap a high price tag on it for the convenience. Plus, the dog's space is not guaranteed as these airlines operate on a first-come, first-served basis. Moreover, before the USDA began regulating animal transportation on airlines, most anyone who flew with his or her dog had a horror story to tell, or, at the very least, had heard one from someone else. Thus, people—dog handlers and trainers included—chose to transport their dogs via car or truck. And for short distances, or attending regionals, it's probably the best way to go.

The dog, used to being crated for car travel, is less stressed and gets exercised more easily. Nevertheless, there are some considerations when transporting your field test dog by automobile. Crates are best, although there are doggie car harnesses on the market. These are specially designed contraptions that basically belt your dog into a seat. Other items to carry would include a leash and collar, dog name tag, food, bowls, water, and medical supplies. And the residents of wherever you walk your dog will appreciate the plastic bags you brought to pick up after it. Because the prevalence of fleas and ticks may increase (and likewise the illnesses associated with them), it's wise to treat dogs with a flea and tick preventative before you leave. Similarly, when you return home, give your dog a post-travel medical exam to ensure it hasn't contracted any internal or external parasites. Since you're probably going to a competition or some other exhibition where your dog is expected to perform, you'll want to keep it exercised and loose during travel. You should stop about every three hours to let the dog stretch its legs. Following these tips, you and your

dog should have a successful and safe trip together.

If, however, you are unable to travel with your dog, then consider a pet transporter. There are different companies that provide different services—some stay on the ground, others travel by air. One of the newest companies to enter this market is Companion Air. This novel airline recognizes that many people want to travel with their pet in as much comfort as possible. Dogs ride in a separate area of the cabin, but may be allowed to visit their owners during a flight. And if the pet can't make it to see you, then you are able to walk back to check on your dog. Companion Air flies jet-prop aircraft and operates out of small, local airports. The company's concept relies on flex scheduling, meaning passengers and their pets (even those that travel alone) need to have some flexibility in their arrival and departure dates. Companion Air is veterinarian-approved and exceeds all USDA regulations for pet transportation. Though it hasn't had its inaugural flight yet, Companion Air plans to fly soon. A sample cost and itinerary might be San Jose to Las Vegas for \$834 for one pet and one person to fly for the airline's Pampered Comfort fare. Pampered Comfort requires 14-day advance purchase and the actual flight might vary by a day on either side of the requested date. Each additional passenger (animal or human) is \$209.

To transport only the pet is \$154.50, and also requires flexibility. For \$1,250, you can fly on the date of your choice as part of the airline's Premier Service.

Sounds a bit posh perhaps, but when your champion joins the ranks of the GMHRCH, only the best in comfort and style may do. 

When Dogs Fly

The table at right provides at-a-glance information for owners who may be flying with their dog. Please be advised that the data pertains to dogs that are traveling only on the same flight as their owners as checked baggage. Many of the airlines, even the ones that don't transport dogs as checked baggage, offer cargo service. Despite the off-putting term, "cargo" can be more efficient and just as safe as having your dog travel with you. The USDA established a series of regulations and requirements that the airlines must abide when transporting live animals, pets included.

For example, for any air travel, whether as baggage or cargo, dogs must be at least eight weeks old and weaned before traveling by air. Kennels must be hard-sided, well-ventilated on three to four sides and have rims to prevent another kennel or luggage from blocking the ventilation, and have a leakproof, solid floor layered in an absorbent material for sanitation. The dog must be able to sit, lie down and turn around comfortably in the kennel. Handles must be accessible to airline personnel so that they can grip the kennel without putting their fingers within biting range. Likewise, food and water dishes must be attached securely and in a way that can be accessed without opening the kennel door. Instructions for feeding and watering the dog during a 24-hour period must be attached to the kennel. Furthermore, when you check your dog in, you must sign a document that you have fed and



Companion Air allows you to travel with your pet in the cabin.

Courtesy Companion Air

watered the dog within the past four hours. And a sign on the outside must indicate "Live Animals" in at least one-inch-high lettering.

Beyond the imposed rules, common sense applies.

- Make sure you note on the kennel your dog's name, your name and address and a contact number or person at your final destination.
- Don't put something in the kennel on which your dog could choke.

- Take direct flights to prevent your dog from having to change planes and risk being left in an undesirable situation.

- Though a flight can be stressful, most veterinarians do not recommend sedatives for your dog. At the high altitudes, tranquilizers can be dangerous to the animal.

- Carry a leash so you can walk your dog before check-in and after arrival.

- Clip your dog's nails before your trip so it doesn't get them hung up in the carrier

door or another opening.

- And finally, talk to airline personnel as much as possible to ensure that they know you are traveling with a dog. Tell them at the ticket counter; tell the attendants at the gate and tell the flight crew.

The more care and concern you show for your dog, the more likely it will get the attention it needs from the airline company's employees. And the more likely it will reach your final destination as safe and happy as possible.



Airline	Excess Bag/Cost (one-way price)	Arrival time (minimum)	Connection (minimum)	Health Certificate
Alaska/Horizon 800-252-7522 www.alaskaair.com	Yes, \$75	2.5 hours	60 min.	Yes, must be dated within 30 days of travel.
Of Note	Bowls should be empty; airline personnel will fill one with water. The number of animals allowed on a flight is limited. You should reconfirm 24 hours in advance. Acclimation orders are accepted if temperature drops below USDA accepted limits.			
American 800-433-7300 www.aa.com	Yes, \$80	90 min.	60 min.	Yes, dated within 7 days of travel.
Of Note	Pet reservations are not guaranteed. Only 7 animals are permitted in baggage. Acceptance on day of travel is first-come, first-served. Will not accept dogs if temperature is colder than 45° F or hotter than 85° F. Acclimation orders are not accepted. An embargo is effective May 15-Sept. 15.			
Big Sky 800-237-7788 www.bigskyair.com	Yes, \$45	3 hours in Denver, 90 min. elsewhere	60 min.	Yes, dated within 10 days of travel.
Delta 800-221-1212 www.delta.com	Yes, \$75	2 hours	NA	Not required, but recommended.
Of Note	Delta's Pet First service issues an embargo from May 15-Sept. 15. Otherwise, it recommends summer flights in the morning and late afternoon, and winter flights are mid-day for pet travel. Kennel size may not exceed 110 inches. Written consent from a veterinarian must be given and shared with Delta if tranquilizers have been given.			
Midwest Express 800-452-2022 www.midwestexpress.com	Yes, \$75	2 hours	NA	Yes, dated within 10 days of travel. If travel is greater than 30 days, another one must be issued.
Of Note	The pet has a separate reservation from the person traveling with it.			
Northwest 800-225-2525 www.nwa.com	Yes, \$229-\$299, depending on kennel size	2 hours	NA	Yes, dated within 10 days of travel. If travel is longer than 30 days, another one must be issued.
Of Note	Northwest's Priority Pet program requires that you call within 24 hours to confirm that your dog is traveling with you.			
United 800-241-6522 www.ual.com	Yes, \$200, for intermediate/extra large dog	90 min.	1 hour	Yes, dated within 30 days of travel.
US Air 800-428-4322 www.usairways.com	Yes, \$100	2 hours	NA	Yes, dated within 10 days of travel.
Of Note	Pet reservations are not accepted, so accommodation is first-come, first-served.			

If you don't see your airline here, it likely doesn't accept pets as checked baggage, although it might allow them as cargo.