

## Tips for Traveling on the Road with Your Dog

**Follow these travel tips when bringing your four-legged friend into your four-wheel drive.**

*Alice Bixler*

More and more, pets are becoming family members. And naturally, you don't want to leave a family member behind when you go on a trip. Consider these tips when traveling with your dog. They'll help both of you travel in more comfort and safety.

### 1. Crate Care

Regardless of the size and spaciousness of your vehicle, the safest way for your dog to travel is in a crate. Contained in a crate, your dog can't interfere with the driver, sneak out an open door when you exit, get whacked against the dash or windshield in the case of a sudden stop or take off in panic should there be (heaven forbid) an accident. If your dog is used to a crate, he'll be more relaxed in these familiar surroundings when on the road and if he chances to get carsick or have an accident, a crate is easier to clean than your car's upholstery. Of course, you may find it difficult (if not impossible) to fit a Saint Bernard-sized crate in your VW or other wee wagon. In that case, look into the possibility of installing a barrier behind the seats. They're available in many sizes and most are adjustable to fit your vehicle's configuration.

### 2. Lead Love

Always keep a lead attached to your dog's crate. If you should have to vacate your vehicle in a hurry, you don't want to waste time searching through all your gear in search of a lead.

### 3. Anchor Accessories

Many of today's SUVs and vans have tie-down points or anchors to keep loads from sliding around. If your vehicle is equipped with these niceties, by all means use them to keep crates from shifting or tilting. Yes, there are dogs who can even turn them over. Bungee cords are handy to keep them stable.

### 4. Water Ways

Take water from home for your pet. All water is not the same and ingesting unfamiliar water can sometimes cause stomach upset. If you run out, it's safer to switch to bottled water than to use the local tapwater.

### 5. Lead Lessons

Always clip a lead on your dog before letting him out of the car and keep him under control. Even the most obedient dog can be spooked in unusual circumstances. Some years ago, a handler, returning from a distant show, pulled into a rest stop in the pre-dawn hours and decided to save time by exercising two dogs at once. Not a good idea. Putting leads on a Saint Bernard and a Dachshund, he stepped out of his motor home just as a semi pulled into the space beside him. When the trucker hit the air brakes, both usually calm dogs freaked. The Saint pulled one direction, the Dachsie pulled the other. The Saint won. As the handler fell, the Dachsie's lead slipped from his hand and the little dog disappeared into the darkness. It didn't help that the rest stop was located only a few yards off a busy interstate. Fortunately, after two hours of frantic searching, the Dachshund was found shivering under a table in the picnic area.

### 6. Dogs IDs

Most trips will be safe and pleasant journeys but it never hurts to be prepared. Keep an identification tag attached to your dog's collar and include your cell phone number rather than your home number when traveling. Microchipping is also an excellent safeguard should your dog become lost. Though not visible, it can be read by veterinarians or shelters and has resulted in many dogs being reunited with their owners.

### 7. On the Loose

If your vehicle is a roomy van or SUV, consider leaving a crate inside at all times so you won't be tempted to have your dog ride loose on short trips. But if you ever do, never leave your keys in the vehicle! It only takes a second or two for your dog to jump at the window and hit the lock button. And of course you'd never, ever leave the engine running...unless your dog has its drivers license.

For more information on traveling with your dog, dog shows and performance, visit [www.dogworld.com](http://www.dogworld.com)!