

Feds Account for Flight-Related Dog Incidents

Three dogs died, another reportedly injured on U.S. flights in October 2006.

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Four dogs were found dead or injured in their kennels after various domestic flights in October, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's monthly air travel report released last week.

American Airlines reported two incidents; one in which a Boxer was found dead after a flight to Los Angeles and another in which a Pug was found deceased after a flight to the Dallas-Fort Worth airport.

The more recent incident occurred Oct. 29, when the Pug was found dead after the flight from Florida's Palm Beach International Airport. According to the airline's incident report, an animal autopsy, or necropsy, showed that the 14-year-old dog's death was attributed to "age-related and environmental stress factors."

In the other incident, which occurred Oct. 9, the Boxer was apparently died on a flight from Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. A subsequent necropsy revealed a pre-existing heart condition. Due to the causes of death being natural, no corrective action was taken by the airline in either incident.

The third pet death occurred Oct. 13 after a flight into Boise Airport in Idaho. According to Atlantic Southeast Airlines, after the flight landed, an airport agent unloaded an 8-month-old Pekingese-Poodle mix and noticed it wasn't breathing.

A subsequent necropsy indicated the puppy died due to pre-existing respiratory distress, "compounded by dystrophic mineralization [large amounts of minerals] causing hardening of the tissues possibly due to over-supplementation."

In the reported injury case, on Oct. 23, four days after a Frontier Airlines flight, the airline reported that it was contacted by the owner of a 7-month-old Doberman Pinscher, who said that the dog was shivering after the flight and was later diagnosed with hypothermia.

According to the report, the passenger did not return subsequent phone calls from the airline regarding the dog's current condition. The airline says the cause of the Doberman's condition is unknown and that according to the flight captain, the temperature on the flight was within an acceptable range.

To date, no corrective action has been taken in the case.

From January through October 2006, there have been a total of 24 animal fatalities – mostly dogs – during air transport, according to Department of Transportation statistics. Nine animals were injured and eight pets lost in that time.