

Dog Dies, Another Injured During Air Travel

The U.S. Department of Transportation reports one dog died and one dog was injured during air travel in October.

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One dog died and one dog was injured in unrelated air travel incidents during October 2007 on U.S. flights, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's monthly air travel report that was released Dec. 3, 2007.

On Oct. 9, American Airlines reported that an English Bulldog was traveling on flight 822 from Port-au-Prince, Haiti to Miami. The dog was found deceased upon arrival. The necropsy findings did not determine an exact cause of death, but theorize it may have been related to the breathing issues inherent in snub-nosed dog breed, resulting in hypoxia or hyperthermia. The report states an investigation was conducted and found the aircraft's temperature controls to be in proper working order. No corrective action was taken.

SkyWest Airlines reported a Labrador Retriever was traveling on Oct. 1 from Salt Lake City to Portland, Ore., on flight 4068. When the flight arrived and ramp agents opened the bins, they saw the dog was loose in the cargo compartment and captured him. The report states the dog appeared to be fine, however the dog's owner called she arrived home and said the dog was limping. She took him to the vet where he was prescribed an anti-inflammatory medication for muscle strain. The airline attributes the incident to incorrect baggage loading or baggage shifting during the flight. After the incident, Salt Lake City ramp employees received follow-up training and a review of proper procedures.

In addition to dog-related incidents, Comair reported one cat escaped and Delta Airlines reported one cat death on flights in late October and early November 2007.

The Department of Agriculture states that they review airlines' incident reports for violations of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), such as kennel size or temperature breaches, and pursue investigations if the department questions whether the AWA was violated, according to the department's animal care staff.

More than two million pets and live animals are transported by air each year in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

-Heidi Hatch, Associate News Editor for DogChannel.com