

Road Rules For Dogs

When traveling with your dogs, the best navigational tools are knowledge and planning.

Audrey Pavia

Posted: Fri Oct 1 00:00:00 PDT 2004

You probably already know quite a bit about traveling. Whether you're headed to a conformation show, agility event, or tracking seminar, a long car ride or an airplane flight is usually par for the course. Consequently, you're no doubt an expert at reading maps, checking into motels, setting up campsites, and eating at coffee shops.

But with all those miles under your belt, how adept are you at keeping your dog safe on the road? The hustle and bustle of getting to a dog event on time can sometimes relegate travel safety to the proverbial back seat.

The truth is, your dog is at risk when you are traveling, whether on the ground or in the air. Accidents happen, as plenty of conscientious dog people can unfortunately confirm.

The good news is, you can do a lot to keep your dog out of harm's way while in transit. Planning ahead is the key, along with knowing your options in safety gear.

Travel By CarNext to salespeople and truck drivers, dog exhibitors probably do more driving than just about anyone. But before loading your dog in the minivan, think about what's ahead on your road trip to better provide for your dog's safety.

First, consider the weather. If your trip will take place in the summer or even fall in some Southwestern states, chances are keeping your dog cool will be your biggest challenge. Make certain the air conditioner in your car is working, and bring plenty of ice in a cooler just in case the a/c goes out and you can't fix it right away. A spray bottle for spritzing your dog with cool water is a must if you'll be outdoors during the heat. Adding peppermint oil (for external use only) will help even tepid water and a warm breeze to cool the skin. Offer your dog fresh drinking water often, and keep him in the shade whenever you can. Packing a rubber bulb syringe in your first-aid kit is a good idea, as dogs with heat exhaustion or heat stroke will not want to drink water on their own.

It's been said before, but it's worth repeating: Never leave your dog in the car during hot weather, even with the windows down. The glass of your car's windows and windshield can cause the air inside to heat to dangerous temperatures when parked in the sun, and even open windows won't help.