

As the summer travel season approaches, many pet owners are asking themselves what to do with the family “pet” while on vacation. Many owners will take their pets with them, depending upon their mode of transportation and their destinations policy on pets. This blog is going to address both taking your pets with you and leaving them at “home”. As an owner of 2 beagles, my husband and I address this same issue when we plan our yearly vacation. We are fortunate enough to have a reliable pet sitter who can stay at our home with them and they love when Grammy comes to visit.

If you need to take your pets with you, then the next question is how are you getting to your destination? If driving, preparation is pretty straight forward. Using a harness or a cage will keep your dog or cat from roaming the car and will keep them safer if you are in an accident. Frequent stops to let your pet run will make them less likely to be fidgety while travelling. Keep in mind that their eating habits once you reach your destination may be disrupted so it is a good idea to take along their favorite toy or even their bed to help them acclimate to new surroundings. Of course, travelling using public transportation is quite a different story. The main thing you need to remember is that all pets need to be current on their shots and most companies will require a health certificate dated within 30 days of travel and signed by your veterinarian. Also required is that your animal be in a crate. If you have never put your pet in a crate and are planning to, it helps to get the animal used to it before you leave. This way being locked in will be a little less traumatic for both you and your pet. One thing to make sure of is that your dog or cat has ample room to move around and stand up in their crate. Before booking travel for your pet on any airline, call to make sure what the fees are and what their specific requirements are. Some airlines allow small dogs to travel on board with their owners rather than in the cargo hold. Most veterinarians do not recommend medicating your pet before travel due to there not being an attendant on board with the animals. Also keep in mind that some states, i.e. Hawaii, require your pet to be quarantined for a specific amount of time regardless of having a health certificate.

If you have decided to leave your pet at home, make sure that they are looked in on each and every day and that they are given fresh food and water. Access to the outside is important for dogs as you don't want to clean up their mess when you get home. If they are kept outside on a permanent basis, try to have a section of their dog run under a tree or covered with a tarp or other artificial roof. This way they have somewhere to lie down out of the sun. Again having plenty of fresh water and food is a must.

There is also the option of boarding your pets. If you choose this option, most kennels or boarders will also require that your pet be up to date on their shots. There are things to look at when choosing a boarding kennel such as exercise time, food (if your dog is finicky will they

allow you to bring in your own pet food) do they have water available at all times. You will also need to ask about emergency services and vet care. The website I found some great information on is www.petmd.com .

I hope you have enjoyed this and that you will remember this when planning what to do with your pets when you travel.

Gina