

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **PET TRAVEL TIPS FROM spcaLA**

**Los Angeles CA** – Planning to travel with pets this holiday season? Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (**spcaLA**) reminds pet companions to keep their pet's health and safety in mind and offers the following tips.

### General travel tips:

- Prior to travel, take your pet to the veterinarian for a check-up and necessary vaccinations. Obtain health certificates and required records depending on the state or country you are visiting.
- Make sure that your pet is wearing a collar with current I.D. tag, is microchipped, and for dogs a current rabies tag. Add a temporary tag with hotel or vacation home info.
- Call ahead to confirm your lodging is pet friendly or make reservations at a hotel that accepts pets.
- Your pet's travel kit should include pet food and treats, water and dishes, familiar toys, blanket or bed, travel papers, grooming supplies, pet waste materials (bags, portable litter tray with litter), handy wipes, leash and collar or harness, medication, sunscreen and insect repellent (formulated for animals) if needed, and a pet first-aid kit.
- Bring along a current photo of your pet and identification information in the event your pet becomes lost.
- Research pet friendly activities such as dog parks or play areas. Find a well-rated doggie day camp if you intend on visiting non-pet friendly sites.
- If possible, start training your pet at a young age to ride in a carrier. Otherwise, weeks prior to your trip, familiarize your pet with their carrier or crate.
  - Open the carrier and toss in yummy, stinky, high-value treats to lure them.
  - Give them lots of positive associations with the carrier like an extra-special chew or a cat nip toy.
  - Place an unwashed article of clothing with your scent inside the carrier (it can be soothing and provide comfort to your pet).
- If your pet has never traveled, take him or her on an overnight or weekend excursion before trying a lengthy long-distance trip.
- Consider pet insurance for added peace of mind.

Tips for travelling by car:

- Always keep your pet secure in a carrier or a seat-belt restraining device.
- Never leave your pet in the car unattended.
- If your pet is new to car travel, take short “practice” trips in the weeks leading up to your travel date. Provide your pet with lots of positive reinforcement.

Tips for travelling by airplane:

- Ideally your pet should travel inside the airplane with you in a carrier. Contact the airline for pet travel requirements.
- Book direct flights and avoid connections and layovers and if possible.
- Do not feed your dog 4 hours prior to the flight and allow water up until the flight time. Give your pet fresh water as soon as you arrive to your destination.
- Your pet’s carrier should fit under the seat in front of you. Line the bottom of the carrier with an absorbent pet pad, and add items that will be soothing to your pet (see General Travel Tips).
- Include your contact information to your pet’s carrier with a luggage tag or in permanent marker.
- Be prepared if your pet becomes unhappy during the flight. Bring small treats or a chew that you can slip into the carrier without opening it all the way. For cats, closing the privacy flaps may help. Use a natural “pet calmer.” Be sure and read the directions as it may require time to take effect.

In the event that your pet is too large to travel in the cabin with you, it may be a better option to leave your pet at home. If your pet absolutely must travel and cannot fly in the cabin, consider the following:

- Use airlines that hand carry your dog (inside the carrier) to and from the aircraft.
- Book a non-stop flight.
- Travel during non-peak times so airline personnel have ample time to handle your pet.
- The carrier or crate should be large enough for your pet to stand up and turn around freely. It should be sturdy with adequate ventilation and an accessible water tray that cannot be turned over. Line the carrier with towels for comfort and to absorb any accidents.
- Be aware that air travel poses certain risks for animals with pre-existing medical problems and short faced dog breeds such as Pugs, Pekinese and Boston Terriers. Always discuss this with your vet prior to traveling.

Most importantly, realistically assess your pet’s ability to travel. If your pet is very young or old or is ill, startles easily, doesn’t react well to strange places and people, a pet sitter or boarding may be the better option.

*For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Ana Bustilloz at (323) 730-5300 x252, 323 707-1271 cell or by email at [abustilloz@spcaLA.com](mailto:abustilloz@spcaLA.com).*

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**spcaLA is an independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California since 1877. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services including Cruelty Investigation, Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education, and a variety of shelter services.**

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