

Introduction to Inter and Intra Country Live Animal Transport

The commercial movement of animals is one of the most regulated areas of transport, encompassing modal specific requirements taking into account the species and number of animals, current weather conditions, temperature and humidity, the length of the journey, light and noise levels. All relevant legislation is founded on the tenet that: "No person shall transport animals or cause animals to be transported in a way that is likely to cause injury or undue suffering to them." The AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) Accreditation Standard 1.5.11 adds "Animal transportation must be conducted in a manner that is safe, well planned and coordinated, and minimises risk to the animal(s), employees, and general public. All applicable local, state, and federal laws must be adhered to."

Animals travel around the world on a daily basis, whether accompanied by their owners or sent through specialist transport providers. People move, taking their pets with them, owners send horses to race meets, zoos undertake exchange and breeding programmes. Animals are transported for economic activity, commercial and business undertakings.

Animals which are part of the family or which operate as service animals are treated very differently from those moved as part of economic activity.

Pet Transport

Families travelling domestically with their pets in the family car, or by public transport, have no additional requirements, except to ensure that "dogs or other animals are suitably restrained so they cannot distract you while you are driving or injure you, or themselves, if you stop quickly. A seat belt harness, pet carrier, dog cage or dog guard are ways of restraining animals in cars." This quote is from the UK Highway Code; similar specific requirements apply in other countries.

If you are an EU national travelling within the EU with your pet provided they are dogs, cats or ferrets, you can move freely, so long as your animal has a European pet passport. This passport is available from any authorised veterinarian and must contain details of a valid anti-rabies vaccination. Young unvaccinated animals and other species are subject to national rules. They must be microchipped or tattooed with the same code as the one documented in the passport to verify their identity at border points.

Service Animals

In many countries, legislation requires that service animals must be carried by airlines or on public transport free of charge and arrangements must be made to facilitate their safe carriage. Trained service animals can include guide dogs for the blind or partially sighted, hearing dogs for the deaf, and animals who recognise warning signs for diabetic episodes seizures, mobility limitations or other needs. Another designation of animals, mostly dogs, are those considered emotional support and psychiatric service

animals. These are not normally supplied and trained by service animal organisations. Many airlines, including Easyjet, do not transport them as service animals, and only some will allow them to travel with the human passenger. Delta Airlines are tightening their requirements from March and require a passenger travelling with comfort animals and psychiatric-service animals to provide a letter signed by a doctor or licensed mental-health professional stating the passenger's need for the animal and an additional signed letter stating that the animal is trained to behave without a kennel.

Airlines such as Delta restrict which animals can travel as assistance or comfort animals. Those excluded include hedgehogs, ferrets, insects, rodents, snakes, spiders, sugar gliders, reptiles and amphibians and all animals with tusks, horns or hooves.

Many countries including, for example, most of South America, Morocco, Egypt, Israel, Kosovo, Turkey and Jordan restrict even recognised service animals.

Passengers need to give at least 48 hours' notice of their intention to fly with a guide or assistance dog and provide vet certificates, and other documentation. The Guide Dogs Association recommends carrying plastic bags, absorbent granules and cleaning wipes, bottled water (where possible), a resealable water container, appropriate snacks for long journeys, a portable food bowl and a fleece/vet bed for the dog to lie on in transit.

Animals Moved Under Commercial Arrangements

European law governs the welfare of animals during transport and applies to anyone who transports live, vertebrate animals in connection with 'economic activity' – i.e. a business or trade – including:

- farmers
- livestock and equine hauliers
- commercial pet breeders
- markets
- slaughterhouses
- assembly centres

Farmed animals, which include cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses, ponies, donkeys and mules, and poultry – i.e. domestic fowl, ducks, geese, turkeys, guinea-fowl, quails, pheasants and partridges are subject to more stringent regulations.

Regulation and guidelines which apply include:

- IATA's Live Animals Regulations (LAR) – (current edition 44)
- CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
- CITES guidelines for the non-air transport of live wild animals and plants
- European Union Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005
- DEFRA, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006, and parallel legislation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

- Animal Welfare Act "The Blue Book" USDA United States Department of Agriculture
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Injurious Species Act
- AZA Association of Zoos and Aquariums species/genus-specific care manuals
- EAZA Association of Zoos and Aquariums European Position Statement on Council Regulation 1/2005: Protection of Animals during Transport

In the UK, local authorities have primary responsibility for enforcing the rules to protect animals during transportation. Companies must therefore apply to their local council for licenses. In the USA, commercial businesses that move animals from one location to another, including trucking companies and airlines, are considered transporters under the Animal Welfare Act and must be registered with the USDA.

General Good Practice

Much of the movement of animals could be considered as common sense. Shippers are required to plan journeys in advance, taking specific consideration of vehicle loading and unloading facilities, space requirements, including height considerations and the need for the animals to lie down. Plans are needed to deal with watering and feeding and dealing with excreta. Anyone involved in the handling of animals must be appropriately trained and must not use violence or any methods likely to cause fear, injury or suffering to the animals. The breed, gender, age and point in the reproductive cycle will affect the capacity of the animal to travel and their needs. Equipment and medication must be provided after a full risk assessment. There may be prohibitions on food being imported into countries which necessitates balancing sufficient food to keep the animals alive (which is generally more difficult the smaller the animal) with restricting the amount so that it is eaten prior to arrival. Plans must be made for inclement weather which, in the event of forecast excessive cold or heat, may necessitate rescheduling the transport.

Specific Requirements

Animals must be confirmed fit to travel, and restrictions apply to very young animals, pregnant females, or those who have recently given birth, sick or injured animals, and those in danger of damage under normal transport conditions such as deer with newly growing antlers.

Animals must be contained in suitable transport units, following the special requirements for their species and providing for all their needs, ensuring they remain contained. Crates should be able to withstand external damage from other freight and able to withstand any internal destruction that may be caused by the animal. White crates or boxes are preferable, to prevent heat absorption. Bedding materials must be considered particularly as potential disease vectors. The units must be capable of dealing with waste materials. IATA regulations state that social species should never be separated from their social groups. This is nowhere so apparent as in the transport of zoo animals, so meerkats travel in families (double contained due to their listing on the USFWS Injurious Species List), and penguins travel in their bonded pairs. Mesh doors or side windows (as in air kennels) should be covered with a breathable, opaque material to allow for ventilation and privacy for the animal (Ott Joslin & Collins, 1999); this will help provide a sense of security for animals being shipped. Arrangements should be made for all consignments to be kept in quiet conditions, away from loud noises, people and other animals as much as is practicable, to reduce stress.



Horses need anti-slip flooring, and those older than eight months are required to wear halters during the transport (there is an exception for unbroken horses), and they must be housed in individual stalls (except for mares travelling with their foals). Pigs cannot climb stairs or steep slopes and so must be provided with gently sloping access ramps. Fish must be transported in sealed containers calculated to contain sufficient oxygen to allow for the entire journey with additional contingency time to consider potential delays. Unless otherwise specified by the species, temperatures in the holding area, cargo, or terminal should be a minimum of 12.8°C and a maximum of 26.7°C. If ambient temperatures are higher than 23.9°C, ancillary ventilation should be provided. Animals should not be left in direct sunlight.

Transport protocols should be well defined, clearly communicated and made available to all relevant staff. Considering all necessary regulatory and species-specific requirements, with provision for expected and predictable risks, allowing some flexibility to react to events as they unfold. Ensuring that all necessary paperwork for compliance with airline, customs and government agency requirements is in place and is correct prior to any physical movement taking place is the key to successful shipping.



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