

Common Travel Safety Questions for Dog Owners

Should my dog be buckled up when it rides in a car?

Yes. Dogs should be properly secured whenever they ride in a vehicle. A properly fitted pet restraint, carrier or crate can help keep your dog safe in a sudden stop or crash while also reducing distractions for the driver. Keep dogs secured in the back seat and choose a restraint designed for vehicle use.

What is the safest way for a dog to ride in a vehicle?

Use a car-safe restraint, carrier, or crate that fits your dog's size and weight. It should keep your dog secured in one spot without relying on a regular leash or walking harness. For extra peace of mind, look for products that have been independently crash tested.

Is it fine if my dog rides in the front seat?

No. The front seat is not built with dogs in mind, just like it is not the safest place for young children. Airbags deploy with serious force, and a pet up front can block your view or get between you and the controls.

Can my dog sit on someone's lap during a car ride?

No. A person's arms are not a safety device. In a quick stop, a dog can slip free or be crushed between the passenger and the dashboard, seat belt, or door.

Is it okay to let my dog stick its head out the window while driving?

It is better to crack the window only enough for fresh air. Dogs can be hit by road debris, irritated by wind and dust, or lose balance if you brake or turn suddenly.

What should I do if my dog barks or whines while I'm driving?

Do not turn around, reach back, or try to settle your dog while moving. Pull over safely first, then check the restraint, offer water, or give them a moment to reset before continuing.

How can I get my dog comfortable with a car restraint?

Make the restraint part of the routine before travel day. Let your dog explore it at home, reward calm behavior, then try short rides so it feels familiar before a longer drive.

What should I bring when traveling with my dog?

Pack a small dog travel kit with water, food, treats, a leash, waste bags, medications, vaccination or vet information, and a familiar blanket or toy.

How often should I stop when traveling with my dog?

For longer trips, plan stops before your dog gets restless. Give them time to stretch, use the bathroom, drink water, and burn off a little energy before getting back in the car.

Is it safe to leave a dog in a parked vehicle?

No. A parked car can become dangerous fast, even on mild days. If your dog cannot go inside with you, it is safest to leave them at home.

Where can pet owners find dog travel safety resources?

AAA can help dog owners plan safer, easier trips. Members can find pet travel tips, pet-friendly hotel information, road trip planning tools, select pet-related discounts, and additional safety resources through [AAA's Pet Owner Resources](#).