

Set-up & Loading a Dog Transport

Planning ways to minimize stress is an essential part of the transport process. You can help promote a positive experience for each animal with just a bit of preparation.

Crate Selection

- Crates should be large enough so each dog can stand, turn around freely, sit upright, stretch, and lie in a natural position.
- Puppies, small dogs, bonded pairs, or littermates can be transported together as long as the crate is large enough to accommodate each animal. If co-housing puppies, each puppy should have ample room to stand, turn around freely, sit upright, stretch, and lie in a natural position.



Crate Set-Up

- Line the bottom of each crate with one or more puppy pads to help absorb liquids, prevent the dog from slipping, and provide cushioning. *For puppies or dogs with a history of ingesting foreign materials, consider using an alternate crate liner or bedding.*
- Affix a water bowl to each crate. Water bowls should contain a small amount of water or be filled with crushed ice to reduce spillage.
- *Optional: Placing a few treats or some squeeze-cheese in the back of the crate will encourage dogs to enter. These snacks may also help puppies maintain normal blood sugar levels during the trip.*

Arranging Crates

- Once the crate size is determined for each dog, plan the location of the crates within the vehicle to optimize the available space, keeping in mind the safety and welfare of the dogs.
- Set up the crates with the largest on bottom and arrange them to allow for adequate airflow through each crate.

Securing Crates

- Once the crates are loaded, securely fasten them to avoid any shifting during transport.
- At a minimum, crates must be fastened to the vehicle itself and, once secured, should not move when pulled or pushed.
- A built-in restraint system, tarp straps, and/or ratchet straps are effective methods when used as designed.
- Heavy-duty tarp straps are a great tool for securing smaller stacks of crates and supplies within the vehicle. Start by securing the crates to each other using a crisscross pattern. Use additional straps to secure the crates to the vehicle's walls to avoid any shifting during transport. When using a tarp strap, it is important to crimp the S hook to ensure the strap does not slip and the hook lays flat against the interior crate surface.



- Ratchet Straps can also be used to secure larger stacks of crates. Use the tarp straps to secure the crates to each other and ratchet straps to secure them to the vehicle. It is important to flatten the straps, so they do not twist before tightening them. They should fit snugly across the center of the crates and be secured by using the ratchet mechanism. Once secured, the individual crates should not move when pulled or pushed.
- ***Cloth-covered bungee cords should not be utilized to secure crates during transport as they are rarely strong enough to adequately secure the weight of a loaded crate and deteriorate with continuous use.***

Loading Dogs

- When it is time for loading, dogs should be presented one at a time.
- Loading dogs by weight from largest to smallest will ensure that an appropriately sized crate is available for each dog.
- To prevent escape, handlers should ensure the vehicle's door is closed until they secure the dog in the crate.
- Do not remove the leash until the dog is safely secured inside the crate.
- Treats and [low-stress handling techniques](#) will help promote a safe and efficient loading experience for both handlers and dogs.
- To promote animal health, handlers should use a different pair of disposable gloves for each animal and avoid direct contact between the animal and their hands or clothing.
- While securely supporting their weight, puppies and small dogs should be wrapped in a towel or puppy pad to prevent direct contact with the handler during loading.