

Helpful tips for travelling in the car with a pet

Summer weekends can mean long drives, sometimes with pets in the car.

Spending a vacation with the family dog or cat can be a rewarding and memorable experience, but planning for the pet's comfort and safety is an important part of any trip.

Here are some tips from the Provincial Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to consider before loading up the car and hitting the road.

? Help the pet get used to its first road trip by taking short drives before vacation time. If the pet experiences motion sickness, consult a vet about possible medications.

? Ensure the pet is properly secured at all times. Smaller animals are more secure in a crate attached by a seat belt. Restraints should allow the pet a bit of movement.

? People like to stop and stretch their legs during a long car ride. So do their pets. Schedule rest breaks along the entire travel route to allow pets to get out and exercise.

? Always have fresh water available in the car. Avoid feeding pets in moving cars to reduce the risk of motion sickness. Bring favourite toys and a pillow to prevent the pet from becoming restless during the ride.

? Add a pet emergency kit to the travel checklist that includes medical records, medicines and first aid items such as nail clippers and liquid bandages.

? And of course, never leave a pet unattended in the car.

Six out of 10 pet owners travel with their pets at least once a year and more than half of all pet trips are with dogs.

More hotel chains are becoming pet friendly, but it is a good idea to call ahead to avoid disappointment.