



Buckle Up: Choosing the Right Pet Restraint for Safe Pet Travel

Once you bring pets into your life, they quickly become members of the family. In fact, a study released by the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association showed that 74 percent of dog owners consider their pet as a child or family member. Who wouldn't want to bring a child along on a family trip? However, car travel with a dog or cat can pose a serious danger.

In an accident, a pet — like a person — can exert a force of 20 times his body weight he's not properly restrained. Car accidents can cause serious, life-threatening injuries in pets, and proper restraints can significantly lessen this risk.

To help keep your pets safe, consider using a restraint or crate for pet travel — in fact, several states, such as California, now require pets be restrained when they travel in a car. This new requirement has many pet parents contemplating which restraint is right for their pet.

Your pet's breed, size and demeanor, as well as your vehicle, all play a role in which restraint you should choose. To help you choose, we've put together this quick guide to pet travel restraints:

Canine Seatbelts

One of the safest ways to secure large or small dogs is with a canine seatbelt system. This type of harness attaches to the existing seatbelt in all vehicle models, as well as to cargo hooks inside SUVs, trucks and wagons. Seatbelt systems allow you to control your pet's range of motion while simultaneously helping them feel safe and secure.

- Features nylon straps that are padded and adjustable
- Designed to distribute pressure evenly throughout your dog's chest
- Most can attach to dog leashes for easy pit stops
- Can accommodate dogs ranging from 15 to 100 pounds, depending on model
- Check with a pet store for appropriate fitting
- Cost: Approximately \$35-50

Pet Car Seats

Similar to children's car seats, pet car seats are harnessed to the head rest of a regular car seat.

Ideal for smaller dogs, these seats restrain your pet comfortably and safely.

- Features adjustable straps, allowing enough height for your dog to look out the window
- Made of padded nylon and include a harness to keep your dog inside the seat
- Usually framed in steel for added protection
- Generally made for dogs between 20 and 30 pounds
- Cost: Approximately \$35 to \$70

Pet Carriers

Pet carriers are an ideal option for traveling with cats and small dogs because they act not only as a form of protection, but also can provide a reassuring space for the pet within the vehicle.

- Attach to the seat belt and headrests of most vehicles
- Entirely enclosed, except for a mesh window that allows ventilation and a view
- Cushioned interiors shield pets from sudden stops or collisions
- Cost: Approximately \$40 to \$100

Pet Crates

For the enclosed protection of a pet carrier for a larger dog, a crate may be a good selection. Unlike a padded pet carrier, crates are often made entirely of durable wire and are designed to accommodate the largest of dog breeds.

- Larger than a pet carrier
- Often also used for puppy training and housebreaking
- Can help make pets more comfortable on the road
- Can be placed in the back of SUVs and station wagons, but may not be designed to sit in the backseat of most cars
- Cost: Approximately \$40 to \$150

Other Aids for Pet Travel

Once you've chosen your pet travel restraint, it's time to consider your pet's comfort — after all, pet-friendly travel goes beyond safety. Unfamiliar environments on the road can easily cause stress in your pet. To help reduce that stress, here are some pet travel tips:

- Bring your pet's favorite toys and blankets so he or she always has a comforting item nearby
- Check out our article on [pet travel tips](#)
- Try using Comfort Zone® with D.A.P.® for dogs. This pheromone-based aid can help calm and soothe your dog — without the use of prescription anti-stress dog medications. [Learn more about Comfort Zone® with D.A.P.®>>](#)

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