



Considerations for pet-friendly passage by air in times of crisis

In times of crisis, families often urgently need to flee their homes in search of safety. For those seeking refuge abroad, transportation and evacuation of their pets by air is additional stress to their struggle.

IATA and Humane Society International (HSI) have joined forces to suggest considerations for pet-friendly passage facilitation for such situations. This document provides matters for consideration by airlines, ground handlers, freight forwarders, airports and governments to ascertain opportunities to provide temporary flexibility with requirements to facilitate pet transport by air on direct routes. It is only applicable in circumstances where urgent, mass evacuations of people occur.

For the purpose of this guidance, pets are defined as dogs and cats. Airlines must remember that any measures put in place must be done without compromising compliance with the [IATA Live Animals Regulations \(LAR\)](#), animal welfare requirements, applicable government regulations and safety.

It is the responsibility of each relevant party to ascertain and ensure compliance with LAR, animal welfare requirements, applicable government regulations and safety requirements, together with any easing of such at any particular moment, direct with the applicable authority. Neither IATA nor HSI take responsibility for any actions, inactions or failure to comply with any LAR, animal welfare requirements, applicable government regulations or safety requirements.

Flexibility with Documentation Requirements

- Airlines along with applicable authorities could work together to determine whether any temporary relaxation of veterinary and any other documentation requirements is possible, together with any restrictions in relation to such. Airlines should check with the appropriate authorities in both departing and destination countries to confirm requirements. An "OK to forward" confirmation from the authorities at destination must be obtained before accepting the shipment.

For example, in circumstances such as the Ukrainian conflict, the [European Commission advised EU Member States to relax veterinary paperwork requirements](#) for dogs, cats and other companion animals travelling with Ukrainian refugees seeking safe passage in EU Member States. Countries subsequently amended import restrictions to facilitate the entry of pets from Ukraine, including those not vaccinated against rabies and/or accompanied by a rabies serology test result. Please refer to the individual EU Member States regulations for the applicable details of each members temporary changes.

- Airlines and governments could consider easing any variation specific to documentation requirements, as well as requirements for advance arrangements.
- In addition to complying with applicable legislation in force at the time, acceptance of pets for air transport remains at the airline's discretion. Airlines must only accept animals which appear to be in good health and condition.



Container Availability

- Collaboration with pet shipping companies and crate manufacturers could be considered to make compliant pet containers available at departure points for transport in the cabin and in the hold.
- Appropriate facilities compatible with applicable legislation at the airport and/or cargo handling facility should be ensured to meet such demands. As per the LAR, containers must have enough space for each animal to stand, to sit erect, to lie in a natural position and to turn about normally while standing.

Veterinary Assistance

- On-site veterinary assistance compatible with applicable legislation could be provided to ensure animal welfare requirements at departure points. Similarly at arrival points, on-site veterinary assistance compatible with applicable legislation could be organized to cover, for example, the provision of microchips, rabies vaccination, information on quarantine requirements, etc.

Capacity

- Where possible, animals of the same species could be crated together to optimize space. A maximum of two adult animals of comparable size up to 14 kg each, that are compatible in size and used to cohabiting may be shipped in the same container/primary enclosure. Animals over 14 kg must be crated individually.
- Airlines could consider increasing the number of pets accepted on individual flights, as carry-on, checked baggage, or cargo. Applicable legislation for any restrictions on the number of pets per flight and aircraft limitations must be considered.
- Prioritize available cargo space to allow for the transport of pets, subject to applicable legislation for any restrictions on the number of pets per flight.

Facilities

- The availability of ground storage facilities and necessary storage conditions for pets need to be taken into account, to ensure there is sufficient space for demand and that regulations are complied with.

Information

- Existing airline customer service across voice, email, chat and social media channels could include information on pets in such situations.
- Regularly inform and empower ground staff to make safe pet-friendly decisions, while respecting the provisions specified in the LAR.
- Consider providing free phone support, in multiple languages.
- Consider providing consultation on pet requirements, regulations and restrictions and helping pet owners obtain a pet passport, (rabies) vaccination(s), microchip and, when required, a health card.
- If the transport of pets is not possible on a specific airline or aircraft type, airlines should clearly state it on their website.
- If the transport of pets is not possible on a specific airline or aircraft type, airlines should strive to form strategic partnerships with air and ground transport companies to reunify pets with their owners at their final destinations.

Advancing the welfare of animals in more than 50 countries, Humane Society International works around the globe to promote the human-animal bond, rescue and protect dogs and cats, improve farm animal welfare, protect wildlife, promote animal-free testing and research, respond to natural disasters and confront cruelty to animals in all its forms.



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