

Moving with pets: checklist & handover

A preparation checklist, not veterinary advice. There is no fixed settling-in deadline. Ask your veterinarian about your pet's health, travel requirements or signs of distress.

Prepare before boxes move

- ☐ Check the phone number on their ID tag and microchip registration. Keep a recent photo handy.
- ☐ Ask your vet about the journey and gather records. Check your carrier, airline and destination requirements before booking.
- ☐ Introduce the travel carrier gradually before departure. Keep familiar food, bowls, bedding and any prescribed supplies together.

Protect moving day

- ☐ Use a secure, quiet room away from open doors and movers. Tell everyone which door must stay closed.
- ☐ Keep water, cleanup supplies, records and their usual essentials within reach—not in the moving truck.
- ☐ Secure your pet appropriately during travel. Never leave them alone in a parked vehicle.

Stage the new home

- ☐ Check doors, windows, cords and accessible hazards before letting your pet explore.
- ☐ Set up one quiet home base with familiar bedding, water and their usual essentials; include a litter box for cats.
- ☐ Keep familiar routines where possible. Introduce more space gradually as your pet becomes comfortable, rather than to a deadline.

Choose the arrival room and pack one clearly marked pet-essentials bag. Note the person responsible for your pet during loading and unloading.

[ASPCA: moving with your pet](#) · [ASPCA: travel safety with pets](#)

Make the plan fit your cat or dog

Use the three shared stages above, then add the details for your pet. In a mixed household, plan each animal's space and care separately.

Moving with a cat: prepare a familiar base

- Choose a quiet room in both homes. Bring the familiar bed, carrier, litter box, food, water and a hiding place together; set up the arrival room before opening the carrier.
- If cats do not get along, plan separate rooms. Give each cat their own familiar resources rather than making the move an introduction to sharing.
- Keep outside doors, windows and cat flaps secured while introducing the new home gradually. Preserve access to the familiar base. Outdoor access needs its own plan; finishing this checklist is not a signal to let a cat outside.

Moving with a dog: keep the next routine clear

- Choose a quiet resting area and unpack the usual bed, bowls and toys first. Keep familiar feeding and walking routines where possible.
- Plan who handles rest and toilet breaks during the journey. Keep the leash, waste bags and water with that person, not in the truck.
- Check the route to the toilet area at the new home, including doors and stairs. Tailor it to your dog's age and mobility; ask your veterinarian about individual needs.

These are household-planning steps, not a settling-in timetable. If eating, toileting, health or behavior concerns arise, contact your veterinarian; do not wait for a checklist stage to finish.

[Cats Protection \(UK\): moving house with a cat](#) · [ASPCA: moving with your pet](#)

B2H editorial checklist, updated September 11, 2026. Preparation guidance is informed by ASPCA and Cats Protection (UK). The handover worksheet is our organizing aid, not a field-tested safety protocol or veterinary advice. Check current travel rules with the relevant carrier and destination.

Agree on the handover before doors open

Use one sheet per pet or group with the same care plan. Agree who is responsible at loading, during travel and after arrival. The next person confirms before the first person leaves.

Your moving-day plan

Pet or group identifier	Responsible during loading
Responsible during travel	Responsible after arrival
Room / door to keep closed at the old home	Room / door to keep closed at the new home
Who carries the essentials bag / where it stays	Handover time and meeting place

Confirm together at each handover

- ☐ We have checked the pet’s location and the secured room or travel setup.
- ☐ The next person has the essentials and has agreed to take responsibility.
- ☐ Everyone moving boxes knows which door must stay closed.

Handover time / confirmed by

Example only: Sam handles loading; Lee carries the essentials bag and takes over for travel. At arrival, Sam sets up the back bedroom. They confirm the pet, bag and closed door together before unloading continues.

B2H organizing worksheet. Not a veterinary assessment, treatment or proof that a pet is ready for outdoor access.

Full guide: boxtoheart.com/pages/pet-move-calm-plan