

**Contact:****Phil Boerner: 916-649-0599 (California Veterinary Medical Association)****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****MAKE YOUR HOLIDAY TRAVEL PLANS PET FRIENDLY**

**Sacramento, CA** – Last year, nearly 4 million Californians traveled 50 miles or more over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. In many cases, the family pet came along for the ride. “Our pets are part of our families, so it’s natural to want to include them in our holiday plans,” says Eric Weigand, DVM, president of the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA). “With a little pre-planning, holiday travel with your pet can be easy and stress free.”

Most holiday travel is done by car to visit relatives. If you plan to drive more than a couple of hours with a dog or cat, remember these tips:

- Stop every 100 miles to give your pet an opportunity to stretch, walk, and drink.
- Have food, water, and clean-up materials available.
- Animals should never be left alone in a car, especially in hot or cold climates; extreme temperature changes can be harmful to your pet.

If you travel by air, call the airline to ask about transport fees and pet policies. Not all airlines will accept pets, and those that do will have restrictions and guidelines. A rabies vaccination certificate and a health certificate signed by your veterinarian within 10 days of your trip are required at check-in. International travel and travel to Hawaii come with their own restrictions; see your veterinarian and plan well in advance for this type of travel.

When you reach your destination, chances are you’ll stay with family. Houses crowded with people, food, and gifts can be dangerous for pets if certain precautions aren’t taken. “If you do take a cat or dog with you, don’t forget about them in the rush of celebrating the holidays,” says Dr. Weigand. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Make sure your pet has a quiet place to retreat to for short periods of time where it won’t be under foot. This can be a kennel or crate that you bring from home, or even just an empty room blocked off with a baby gate.
- Lots of coming and going means open doors, and nervous pets may see them as a means for escape. Keep doors and windows closed if possible, and keep an eye on your pets when people come and go.
- Your pet should wear up-to-date identification in case they do escape in an unfamiliar city. Update your pet’s tags before your trip, and consider having your veterinarian implant a microchip that will trace your pet to you if you become separated.
- Be sure and take plenty of your pet’s food with you when you travel. Changing foods can be disruptive to the digestive system. Remember that human food like turkey, stuffing, and sweets should not be fed to pets. Especially avoid turkey bones. Also, keep plenty of fresh water available.

- Remember to take the following with you: leash and collar or harness, proper license and identification tag, prescribed medications, pet toys, photos of your pet, current shot records, and your veterinarian's phone number.

Some hotels, motels, and inns provide "pet friendly" rooms, if you don't stay with family for the holidays. An Internet search can quickly identify a place for you and your pet. When you call to make your reservation, let the hotel know you are bringing an animal with you. Most hotels ask that a pet not be left alone in the room, and a pet fee may be assessed to cover expenses associated with cleaning and maintaining rooms that accommodate animals.

For more information about this press release, contact Phil Boerner at the CVMA at (916) 649-0599. To access past CVMA press releases, visit the CVMA Media Center in the News Room at [www.cvma.net](http://www.cvma.net).

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*The California Veterinary Medical Association is the largest state veterinary medical association in the United States, with more than 5,400 members. Founded in 1888, its mission is to serve its membership and community through innovative leadership and to improve animal and human health in an ethically and socially responsible manner.*

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