

# On the move

Relocating? Prevent doggie stress.

By Charlotte Reed

**N**ancy Johnson had so much to worry about when moving from New York City to Charlotte, N.C., last year that her 2-year-old Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, Molly, was the last thing on her mind. Between the packing up, moving out, staying in a hotel, and rushing to greet the moving van, Molly had had enough. She slipped out the front door just as the movers carried in the sofa. Nancy found an exhausted and shaking Molly hours later — and, having left the movers to unload her belongings without

direction, a bed in her dining room.

Lesson learned? During the commotion and upset of daily routines involved in relocating, your dog needs you to look out for her security more than ever.

Follow these tips to help keep your dog safe before and during your move:

- Pay careful attention, especially to a puppy, during the packing and unpacking



**Plan to keep your dog safe and feeling secure during this busy time.**

process: Your dog might ingest packing peanuts or chew items normally out of her reach.

- Since packing might pile up, beware of towering boxes that could fall on your dog.

## 12 tips for a smooth move

When relocating with a dog, plan ahead to prevent last-minute problems.

- 1** If you're moving to a new state or country, check rules pertaining to imported animals. Visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service ([www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/petravel.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/petravel.html))
- 2** Discuss your pet at the first meeting with a real estate or rental professional. Tell your agent about your dog's breed, size, and personality, so the agent can find the best home for both of you.
- 3** Investigate all animal-related costs. Many apartment buildings, condos, co-ops, and gated communities require tenants and owners to pay a non-refundable bond for their animals. Ask about monthly pet maintenance fees.
- 4** Learn about local and state regulations — including the number of pets per home and dog licensing requirements. Check with the health department in your new hometown.
- 5** Purchase an airline-approved crate large enough for your pooch to stand up, turn around, and lie down in. (See "Crate Advice," DOGFANCY, Feb. 2004, page 20.)
- 6** Schedule a comprehensive checkup with your veterinarian seven to 10 days before traveling with your dog. Have your veterinarian provide

you with the following: a dated health certificate certifying that your pet is in good health and that she has received all required inoculations; your dog's medical records; extra medication; and, if possible, a referral to a veterinarian in your new town.

- 7** Make sure your dog wears a comfortable collar with identification at all times during the move. Information on the tags should include your pet's name, your name, new address, cell phone number, and new telephone number.
- 8** Take plenty of your dog's food and purchase bottled water to avoid stomach upset when traveling.
- 9** If you'll need to stay in a hotel along the way, find one whose pet policy ensures you and your dog are welcome. Don't plan to just find one along the way.
- 10** Carry a recent photograph of your dog with her vital statistics written on the back. List her name, age, color, breed, and any necessary medical information. If you get separated, you can easily make fliers identifying your lost pet.
- 11** If necessary, have your pet stay in a boarding kennel until you are settled into your new home. To find a reputable boarding kennel, call the American Boarding Kennel Association at (719) 667-1600 or visit [www.abka.com](http://www.abka.com)
- 12** Provide extra cuddles, walks, and one-on-one time when you can fit them in to reassure your dog that she's part of the family.



■ And, as Johnson learned, when the time comes for the boxes to come or go, watch the door. An open door provides an easy escape for a dog riled up by all the chaos.

■ Even if your dog seems to like the excitement, restrain her during loading and unloading to keep her tail and paws out from under your feet and the movers' boots.

■ Who can expect a dog to show restraint at a time like this? When in doubt, use a crate as a respite for an over-stimulated or curious dog. Put the crate in a room as far from the hubbub as possible, with soft music or a TV playing quietly. A favorite blanket or toy inside the crate will add familiarity and comfort for your dog when everything else around her is upsetting and foreign.

Babette Haggerty-Brennan of Palm Beach, Fla., a certified dog trainer and author of *Woman's Best Friend: Choosing and Training the Dog That's Right for You* (Contemporary, 2004, \$14.95) recommends acclimating your pet to the crate slowly. "Keep the door open and encourage her to go in and out," she writes. "Have her get used to the crate by rewarding her with her favorite toys and food treats. Eventually close the crate door so she can adjust to the confined space as a room of her own."

■ Ensure safe travel. Whether you will drive down the road to your new home or fly across the country, use a crate. Staying on the ground will be much less stressful on dogs, but frequent stops for leashed exercise and bathroom breaks are essential. In an automobile, restrict pets to the backseat in their crates or safely secure them with doggie seat belts.

If you must fly, find out which airlines allow animals on board. When planning a trip by air, don't rely on your travel agent. Call the airline directly and speak to representatives about fees, policies, and requirements for dog crates.

■ Finally, as soon as you can, make a concerted effort to resume your dog's normal feeding, exercise, and sleeping schedule. Place food, toys, and bedding in similar locations to where they resided in your old home to give your dog reference points and help her establish a familiar routine when everything else is new.

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