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Guidelines for Pilots

Flying with pets will require the pilot to consider some things not typically considered.

1. The size and weight of the pets needs to be determined and the carriers they will fit in must be able to fit in the plane and be secured.
2. For larger animals, a pet harness that can be secured to seat belts or seat belt attachment points can also be considered.
3. If you have any questions regarding anything relative to the animals during transport please contact the sending or receiving rescue.
4. Allow the animals to relieve themselves before being loaded. Even if this is done some animals will relieve themselves in the plane and some will vomit. Expect this to happen.
5. It may help if the animals have a limited intake of food or water prior to the flight. However, as soon as the trip is complete provide water and some nutrition for the animals. Even if the flight is of short duration accidents can and will happen. Carry plastic bags to put the bedding in for the return flight to minimize odors in the cabin as a result of accidents.
6. Sedating animals is a decision best left to the veterinarians the sending party and the receiving party.. Almost all animals that are vocal when loaded quiet down and sleep once the plane is running or airborne. Occasionally an animal will bark or yelp or make noises. It is probably not necessary to sedate an animal unless it has some type of behavior problems or is easily scared. Often talking in a soothing voice to the animal relaxes the animal.
7. Ask the sending rescue for the proper paperwork showing that the animal has a current rabies tag and health certificate. (Where applicable).
8. Be sensitive to the fact that unlike humans who swallow and yawn when they feel the altitude changes in their ears, the animals being transported don't know things like that and they may feel discomfort during climbs and descents. Minimize the rate of those climbs or descents to minimize the discomfort to animals. If possible protect them from noise. There are products on the market to protect the ears of dogs from loud noise such as the engine of the plane.

9. Pilots beginning to fly with animals may wish to have some assistance on initial flights. A person comfortable with general aviation flying and animals will prove to not only be good company, but can help with the various chores related to a flight. That person can also monitor the animals during the flight.
10. Loading an animal into the carrier is sometimes difficult and is especially beneficial if there is help available.
11. Ultimately, the final reward of getting these animals to safety is a feeling of great accomplishment. If you are an animal lover, you will understand the great gift you are giving.
12. Don't forget to do a weight and balance.
13. IMPORTANT!! ALWAYS CLEAN YOUR CRATES AND PLANE SEATS AFTER EACH TRANSPORT.