

THE PUPPY SENDOFF

*Making the trip home easier for
new puppies and owners!*



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Table of Contents

Preparing Puppies for the Trip Home	4
<i>Hitting the Road with Your Litter</i>	6
<i>Preparing Your Pups for Flying</i>	10
<i>Flying Puppies as Freight</i>	12
<i>Flying Puppies as Carry-On Baggage</i>	15
<i>The Day of Departure</i>	19
<i>For your Puppy Buyers</i>	21
Driving Home With Your Puppy!	22
<i>Gather Your Gear Ahead of Time</i>	22
<i>Setting the car up for success!</i>	23
<i>Locating the crate</i>	23
<i>Motion</i>	24
<i>Temperature of the vehicle</i>	24
<i>Preparing the crate for the trip</i>	25
<i>Documentation</i>	26
<i>When to get on the road</i>	26
<i>Meals</i>	27
<i>Pottying the puppy</i>	27
Flying Home With Your Puppy!	29
<i>Reservations</i>	29
<i>Documentation</i>	30
<i>Gather Your Gear Ahead of Time</i>	30
<i>Sherpa bags</i>	31
<i>Using Potty Packs</i>	34
<i>What to expect on the flight</i>	34
<i>When to get on the road for the airport</i>	36
<i>Setting the car or taxi up for success!</i>	37
<i>Locating the Sherpa</i>	37
<i>Motion</i>	37
<i>Temperature of the vehicle</i>	38
<i>Meals</i>	38
<i>Pottying the puppy</i>	39
<i>Preparing the Sherpa for the trip</i>	40

As breeders, we love the feelings of sending a litter of beautiful pups off to their new homes. Those days are filled with excitement and joy—for us and the families who have been anxiously awaiting their new puppy. However, we also have a bit of worry about how the pup will handle the transition to its new home, starting with the trip home since the trip can be stressful for all concerned, especially the puppy.

Having sent home hundreds of puppies over the last 35 years we've learned many things that can help make those trips easier, whether new owners are driving to the next town or flying across the continent. We are delighted to share what we have learned with you in this ebook so you can make your puppies' transitions to their new homes a good experience for everyone.



Heading home

We have broken this ebook down into three parts:

- Preparing Puppies for the Trip Home—things breeders can do before sending pups home
- Driving Home with Your Puppy—things puppy owners can do to make that drive go smoothly
- Flying Home with Your Puppy—things puppy owners can do to ensure an uneventful flight home

We've also created resource lists in each section to help you gather the items you will need.

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1 Preparing Puppies for the Trip Home

There are many things breeders can do to help puppies travel more comfortably. These preparations may take a bit of time on your part but will give your pups a good start in their new lives, especially if they will be traveling a lot in their lives. Our pups often start traveling by five weeks of age but we've had litters as young as three weeks make cross-country trips without problem.

- **Accustom your puppies to eating in different places.**

Once you have started feeding your puppies solid food, give them meals in different rooms in your home. They cannot only have meals in the puppy pen but also “picnics” in the kitchen, on the porch, the backyard or even in the basement. Use different dishes, too. Sometimes make it a real picnic with paper and plastic plates, other times use the ‘fine china,’ a simple glass pie plate.

If they are too nervous to eat in new places, take them back to that place many more times until it feels like home to them. If they are still nervous each time you change locations, let them nurse while in the new room. Nursing on mom calms puppies and reduces fears not only due to warm tummies but because of the calming pheromones released during the nursing process.

- **Teach your pups to sleep anywhere anytime.**

When you give your pups playtimes in different places, such as various rooms in your house or at friend's houses, be sure to also let them sleep there. Let them play until they fall asleep so they can take a nap in a new place. This will acclimate them to sleeping in new locations rather than just playing there. As a result, falling asleep away from home, such as on the car ride to their new home, will not be foreign to them.



- **Take your litters for car rides**

Puppies that first travel very early in their lives with their dam and littermates usually learn to love traveling. Their mom's presence gives them confidence and comfort, unless she hates to travel. If that is the case, leave mom at home and let the puppies travel with each other.

We have found that puppies that have their first car ride before six weeks of age tend to have lower rates of car sickness in adulthood. We can't be sure but think there is a physiological reason for this—somehow early car rides changes how they develop.

Plan ahead so that your pups go to fun places. Early trips are stressful for puppies so you want them to end in a good experience, such as playtime at a friend's house or a woods walk. Puppies whose only car experience ends at vet visits for vaccinations will be more likely to see car rides as bad things, which often ends with carsick pups.

During car trips, puppies will have many new experiences. They will:

- feel the movement of the vehicle itself,
- see buildings, trees and other vehicles moving past them,
- hear strange sounds both inside your vehicle and the outside noises of cars, trucks and motorcycles going by,
- feel the vibrations, bumps and turns the car makes and
- smell the many smells inherent in travel.

Taking your litter for car rides will result in these experiences becoming “normal” for your puppies and will also help prevent pups from getting carsick as they get older.



Hitting the Road with Your Litter

Gather your gear

Just like traveling with a human baby requires a bit of “stuff,” so does traveling with puppies. Most of these are items you will already have on hand for your pups or adult dogs.

- **Crates.** To keep you and your puppies safe, they should be confined in the car to a crate or a pen. You simply can't keep your mind on the road with puppies roaming free in your vehicle. So secure them a few to a crate (or even more) before heading off on your adventure.
- **Exercise pen.** We never travel without an ex-pen in the car, just in case we have an emergency that requires offloading puppies along the side of the road. You can quickly set up the ex-pen to safely confine the puppies, if needed.
- **Crate mats.** Use washable crate mats to keep your pups from slipping and sliding in the crate while on the road. Don't use your most expensive crate mats since there is a chance the pups will soil them during their first trips.
- **Water and a water container.** Most pups do best with water from home so pack up some water and a container, such as a bucket or Water Hole.
- **Treats.** If your pups are eating solid food, prepare some high-value treats for their trip. Dice some meat, such as chicken, turkey, beef or pork, into small pieces to reinforce them during the trip.
- **Bed sheets.** If your puppies can see out while in the crates, you will need enough bed-sheets to completely cover the crates.
- **Shade cloths.** Protect the crates from direct sun with shade cloths or reflective tarps.
- **Meals.** If you will be gone during one of the pups' mealtimes, pack a “picnic” for them. Don't forget feeding dishes, serving spoons and clean up items.
- **Litter pan and litter.** Bring along a portable litter pan and the litter you have been using. We slip a filled **Puppy Go Here** pan into a large trash bag, making traveling with it much cleaner.
- **Toys.** Bring along some of your puppies' toys so they will have some familiar items on the trip, as well as something appropriate to play with.

- **Clean-up supplies.** If you will be stopping somewhere during your trip, bring along paper and cloth towels and enzymatic cleaner, such as **Nature's Miracle** or **Simple Solution**. This makes cleaning up accidents and muddy paws much easier.
- **Paperwork.** If you are going to an evaluation or vet visit, don't forget your paperwork!
- **Sweaters or jackets.** You and your passengers should be prepared for riding in a very chilly car so bring along a sweater just in case.

Prepare the Car

Trips with your litter will go more smoothly if you have done all your preparation before you load the puppies.

- **Cool the car down.** If it is at all warm, turn the air conditioner on in the car. A hot puppy is a miserable puppy so keep your car cool. We once took a litter for their health exam on a snowy, 20° Fahrenheit day. The pups were crying a lot and it took us a while to figure out that they were hot. So there we were, on this freezing winter day, driving with no heat on. Sure enough, the pups quickly went to sleep and slept the rest of the way.



Car temperature is important!

If you do not have air conditioning, plan your trip for the coolest part of the day, open the windows and park in the shade.

- **Load the crates and mats.** Decide how many puppies will fit comfortably in each crate. Be sure the puppies are not overcrowded, but also that none are alone. If you have a singleton puppy, he can travel with his mother in a large crate.
- **Cover the crates.** If your puppies can see out the windows from their crates, place a sheet over the crate to completely cover them. Seeing motion outside of the car can make it difficult for puppies to settle and can trigger car sickness. Covering crates makes a huge difference in getting a litter to settle in the car.
- **Block the sun.** Even if the puppies cannot see out the windows, if the puppies are in the direct sun use a sunshade or sheet to block the sun so the puppies don't overheat.
- **Load your stuff.** Put any personal items you will need for the trip such as your pocketbook, coffee, water or iPod, into the car early on. Once you start loading puppies, it's easy to forget these items.

- **Place a few toys in each crate.** Do not put high-value chews, such as bully sticks or bones, into the crate that the puppies might fight over!
- **Preload the crates.** Toss a few handfuls of really tasty treats into each crate so that the pups are immediately rewarded in the crate.
- Check to be sure you have everything you need for the trip loaded into the car.

A few warnings!

- **Do not feed your puppies before a car ride!** The excitement of the trip on a full stomach can make puppies nauseous. Once pups vomit in a vehicle, car sickness becomes a real risk. So take hungry puppies in the car and feed them at your destination.
- **Do not put water in the crates with the pups.** Water buckets and containers are unnecessary for trips with puppies. Not only are they likely to spill, getting the pups wet, but they also are obstacles that pups can get injured on while in the crates. Give your pups water at each stop rather than putting water in the crates.

Load the puppies

- **Potty first!** Now it's time to load the puppies but first, try to get them to potty. Do not wake them from a sound sleep and put them in the car or they will need to pee or poop right away. If you can, take them outside for 10-15 minutes before putting them in the car. If you cannot, get them up and moving in the pen so they can go before the trip.
- **Put the pups in the crates.** As you load the pups, be careful closing crate doors since it's easy to get toes and tails caught. The treats should encourage pups to go to the back of the crates so you can stick their traveling companion in without anyone bailing out of the crate. Be careful not to let a puppy fall!
- **Turn on some music.** As soon as the last puppy is loaded, turn on some music and crank up the air conditioning if it is warm. We have found litters have different taste in



Game Bird litter arriving for a woods walk

music—some respond best to rock and roll, others love country, while still others calm down to the classics.

- **Hit the road.** As soon as the last puppy is loaded, try to get on the road right away. The pups are going to cry once in the crates so your best chance at quieting them down will come from sound (music), temperature (cool) and the movement of the car down the road.

On the road

- **Expect noise.** Most puppies cry for a while when you start out. Don't worry if the crying goes on for 10 to 15 minutes but if it goes longer than that, change something:
 - Start by making the car cooler.
 - Change the music.
 - Check to be sure the pups cannot see out of the crate.
 - Check to be sure there is no direct sunlight on the crate.
- **Stop to potty.** After your puppies have quieted down and slept on the trip, be alert when pups start crying again. This usually means they need to potty. We typically look for business parks or non-dog areas in rest areas to reduce the risk of the pups coming in contact with poop or pee from strange dogs. However it is more important that the puppies do not pee in the crate so pull off the side of the road, if necessary. Put the ex-pen out and let the puppies potty.



Preparing Your Pups for Flying

If some or all of your pups are flying to their new homes, you will need to do some extra preparation. There are two ways to fly puppies, freight and in the cabin. Both require training for the pups plus additional administration.

Plane Reservations

Most airlines require a reservation for an animal to fly in the cabin with a passenger or as freight. You or your buyer should contact the airline as soon as possible to make those arrangements. This is especially true for those flying their pup with them in the cabin since airlines limit the number of animals allowed on each flight.

When you talk to the airline representative, be sure to find out their requirements for health documentation, crates, food and water. Also get their recommendations for when the puppy should be at the airport and where you should check it in. When you fly a pup in the cabin, you will check in normally but if you are flying a puppy as freight, you will usually need to drop the puppy elsewhere in the airport.

Remember, most airlines have strict restrictions regarding flying dogs. These restrictions include size of dog, whether they ship freight and/or carryon, size and weight of the dog, etc. Contact your carrier early so you have all the information you need for the puppy's trip.

Documentation

At a minimum, you should supply a bill of sale and veterinary health certificate with each puppy. What form that certificate takes will be determined by where the pup is going. Crossing state and international borders by car or plane requires different documentation. Each governing agency has its own requirements for the sale, transportation and importation of puppies so be sure to check with the appropriate governing agency to see what is required for your puppies' trips.

- Remind your buyers to keep their puppy's health certificate handy for the trip, as opposed to packing it away in a suitcase.
- If traveling by plane, be sure the puppy's health certificate meets the requirements of both the airline on which the puppy is flying and, if crossing any international border, customs requirements.

- Typically having a health certificate dated within 10 days of travel is acceptable, but you want to check with the relevant agencies to be sure.
- Since many of our puppies travel to Canada [here's the link](#) you will need for the form needed to bring a puppy from the United States into Canada.
- If you are sending a puppy to or from a different country be sure to check with the appropriate government agencies to get the forms your buyers will need to travel across a border.

<small>According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control numbers for this information collection are 0579-0036 and 0579-0333. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average .25 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.</small>				<small>No dog, cat, nonhuman primate, or additional kinds or classes of animals designated by USDA regulation shall be delivered to any intermediate handler or carrier for transportation in commerce, unless accompanied by a health certificate executed and issued by a licensed veterinarian (7 U.S.C. 21.43.9; CFR, Subchapter A, Part 2).</small>				<small>OMB APPROVED 0579-0036 0579-0333</small>																																				
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Sample of APHIS form 7001

Crates for Flying

If your puppy is flying in the cabin, it will be in a Sherpa bag. If the puppy is flying as freight, it will need a plastic, airline crate. Both of these crates must be the right size for the puppy per the airlines regulations. Airlines can refuse to take the puppy if you do not have the right size crate, although they are usually much more flexible on Sherpas than shipping crates.

Flying Puppies as Freight

Sending puppies home as freight is riskier than having someone carry them on board so it's important to put some effort into ensuring your pup has a good experience. That means quality equipment and preparation.

Airline crates

Airline crates are sturdy, plastic crate with wire doors and often wire ventilation panels along the sides. There are many manufacturers of these plastic crates so be sure yours complies with airline regulations for shipping dogs.

Most airlines require that food and water containers are affixed to the crate door so airline personnel can feed and water the dog, if needed. We make a few more additions to the crate to ensure the puppy has an easy trip:

Inside the crate

- **Set up the crate.** We layer the bottom of the crate, starting with shredded newspapers or wood shavings on the bottom beneath a washable crate mat, such as a Steri-lon pad. If the dog should potty or vomit in the crate, the newspaper will soak up most of the moisture, keeping the dog drier.
- **Collar with contact info.** Be sure the puppy is wearing a safe, buckle collar that has your phone number on it so that if by chance the puppy gets loose, you can be contacted easily.
- **Frozen water.** Freeze water in the water container and keep it in an ice chest until right before the airline personnel take your dog. Since the containers are very shallow, water easily spills out of it. Often the container is empty by the time the dog gets loaded in the hold. Freezing the water increases the chance that the dog will have access to some water on the plane.



- **Stuff Kongs.** Provide your puppy with stuffed Kongs with really good treats/food in them. Although some pups are too nervous to eat, many get bored during the flight. Kongs will provide your pup with something healthy to do and will keep him fed without making a mess.

Outside the crate

We want airline personnel to take good care of our dogs when flying so we make their crate eye catching and fun. We use stickers and signs to introduce the puppy to the people who will be taking care of her on the trip.

Hi! My name is Sparky!! I'm a friendly golden retriever going to my new home at:

Person

Address

Phone number

I can't wait to meet my new family!

My leash and food are on the top of my crate should you need them.

If there are any problems, contact my best friend, fill in your name at give your cell phone number.

Thanks for taking such good care of me!

Then put the puppy's leash and two meals in Ziploc bags that you tape on the top of the crate so they are visible and easily accessible.

Crate training

Crate training is essential before shipping a puppy as freight. It is unfair to send a puppy off on such a stressful trip without proper preparation.

There are many ways to crate train a litter so we will only offer a few suggestions here:

- Once the pups are over 4 weeks old, put a crate with the door removed in their pen so they can move in and out of it freely.
- Starting at about five weeks of age, begin locking pairs or trios of pups in crates for very short periods, starting with a minute and working your way up as they become more comfortable.
- Between six and seven weeks, place the pups in crates by themselves and be sure to generously reward quiet puppies!!!

The amount of time it takes to crate train a litter varies with the size and temperaments of the litter. Regardless, the payoff is huge for both your puppies and your buyers when you do it.



Crate training session

Flying Puppies as Carry-On Baggage

It is pretty easy to send puppies home as carry-on baggage, although you can make the trip much easier for owners by preparing puppies and some supplies for them ahead of time.

Sherpa bags

Puppies that fly as carry-on baggage must be contained in small crates, ideally Sherpas. Sherpas are small soft-sided crates designed to fit under the seat on a plane. There are other brands of soft-sided crates that can be used, but when looking into them make sure they comply with airline regulations for carry-on luggage.

Unless your buyers are strong, encourage them to get a simple, light-weight luggage cart that they can strap the Sherpa to for long hauls through the airport.

Condition Your Puppies to the Sherpa

Have your buyers ship their Sherpa bags to you ahead of time, unless you have one you can lend them. That will give you time to get the pups comfortable with the Sherpa. If you know which puppies are being sent to homes that will be flying, condition those pups to the Sherpa. If you are not sure which puppies will be flying, introduce the Sherpa to all of them. The pups that won't be flying will just have another great experience!

Start by making the Sherpa smell familiar. Put it in the puppy pen for a few hours but monitor the puppies to ensure they do not damage it. You want it to smell like your pup's mom, litter-mates and home.

Next, condition the puppies to the Sherpa. This is a quick process that can be done over a week or in 36 hours. Spend just a few minutes on each step and progress as the puppy is comfortable. Talk quietly to the puppy and allow her to see you. Feel free to pet her while the top of the Sherpa is unzipped, or through the mesh sides.

● **Step One**

- Place the Sherpa on the floor or a table so it will not move when you place the puppy inside.
- Open all of the flaps—top and ends, if the Sherpa has both.
- Toss a handful of REALLY GOOD treats inside the bag.

- Open the top flap as wide as it will go and place the puppy in the bag leaving the flap open.
 - Allow her to eat the treats, showing them to her if necessary.
 - Toss in additional treats while she is in the bag.
 - Continue to toss in treats for 2-3 minutes.
 - Take her out of the bag. Don't give her any treats after she has been removed from the bag.
- **Step Two**
 - Repeat the step above continuing to treat her for 4-6 minutes before taking her out of the bag.
 - While she is eating, stroke her across her back.
- **Step Three**
 - Repeat Step Two but zip the bag closed about half way continuing to toss treats into the bag for 1-3 minutes before taking her out of the bag.
- **Step Four**
 - Repeat Step Three, but now zip the Sherpa bag until it is completely closed and allow the puppy to eat the treats.
 - While she is eating, unzip the bag just enough to drop in additional treats. Be sure not to let her escape from the bag.
 - Continue to add treats zipping and unzipping the bag for 1-3 minutes.
 - Unzip the bag and take her out. Don't give her any treats after she has been removed from the bag.
-
- Be careful not to let the puppy escape*
- **Step Five**
 - Repeat the Step Four, dropping in lots of amazing treats and zip the bag completely closed.
 - Pick up the bag being sure to hold it horizontally so she can keep her balance.

- Slowly walk around the room with the bag.
- Stop walking and set the bag down so you can unzip the bag just enough to drop in additional treats. Again, be sure not to let her escape from the bag. Remember while she is in the bag you can quietly reassure her.
- Walk around the room for 5-10 minutes stopping to reward her with treats and praise. If the puppy is relaxed you can unzip the top to pet her and scratch her head.
- Take her out when she is calm and relaxed. If she is upset, unzip the top and put your hand in to pet and stroke her. Wait for her to calm down before taking her out.
- Remember not to reward the puppy with treats after she has been removed from the bag.

Prepare Potty Packs for your Pup's Trip Home

If you are sending pups home as carry-on baggage, you can make the trip much easier for owners and puppies by preparing on-board potty packs. Depending upon the length of the flight, we send two to four potty packs with each owner. For flights less than six hours, send two packs. For those over six hours, send three to four.

- **Potty Packs**

Fold and place the following in a one-gallon Ziploc bag:

- One **wee wee pad**
- A few paper towels folded individually
- A snack-sized Ziploc bag of pellets, shavings or whatever you used as litter for the puppies

- **Using a Potty Pack**

- To use a potty pack, tell your buyers put the wee-wee pad on the ground in a bathroom stall and sprinkle the litter on it. Keep the puppy on leash while encouraging her to potty on the pad. Wait patiently since puppies often are distracted when you first put them down.
- Once the puppy potties, fold up the used wee-wee pad and put it in the Ziploc bag. Use the paper towels to clean up any spillage. Toss them in the bag, seal it and dispose of everything in the bathroom trash container.

In addition to potty packs, provide or instruct your buyers to get the following items for each puppy that is flying

- **Treats**, a variety of healthy, tasty treats that do not need refrigeration (use coupon code AVIDOG20 for 20% OFF bags, bulk, and rawhides)
- **Water container**. A small, sealable container for water, such as a Tupperware or Ziploc container. Remind them to buy their bottle of water AFTER they get through Security so it won't be confiscated on the way through.
- **Chews**. Get a few puppy-sized chewies, such as **stuffed Kongs**, **bully straps** (use coupon code AVIDOG20 for 20% OFF bags, bulk, and rawhides), **pig's ears** and **marrow bones**. If they are traveling internationally, be sure they know the importation rules for bringing chews into the country.
- **Comforting smells**. A soft toy and/or towel that has the scent of the puppy's mom and littermates on it.
- **Cooling bags**. Four to six quart-sized Ziploc bags that they can have the flight attendant fill with ice, then double bag them and put them in the Sherpa to keep the puppy cool.
- **Benadryl tablets, split into the appropriate size for their puppy**. Benadryl makes most puppies drowsy so tends to make the flight go more smoothly. Recommend they give the first dose 30 minutes before they take off and then every 6-8 hours thereafter. We give our 10-12 pound puppies ½ Benadryl every 6 hours. Check with your veterinarian to find out what the correct dose would be for your puppies.
- **Meals**. If they are traveling for more than three hours, prepare meals in individual containers so they can easily feed the puppy on the trip. If you are feeding raw, package the food in throw-away containers so they don't have to deal with messy food bowls.



The Day of Departure

What happens on the day the puppies heads home can make or break their trip. Here's what you can do to help make the travel day easier for everyone.

Feeding the puppies

Be sure to feed the puppies **at least** an hour, ideally more, before they head off on their trip to avoid their becoming carsick.

Exercising the puppies

As we all know, a tired puppy is a good puppy! Get your puppies out to play so they have had plenty of exercise the day they head to their new homes. This will increase the chance the puppy will sleep during the trip. Even if you've bathed and groomed each puppy so they look and smell wonderful when their new family arrives, it's better to let them get a little dirty than have the trip home go badly.



Let them tire each other out before the trip

Prepare meals for the road

Find out how long the trip home will be and prepare enough individual meals for the puppy, complete with disposable container that the pup can eat from. You want the new owner to be able to easily grab one meal while traveling! Throw in an extra meal, in case of an emergency.



Food packed and ready to travel

Pottying before departure

Just before putting the puppy in the car to leave, give him one more chance to potty, either in the puppy pen or outside.

Stuff for the car

Before your buyers put the puppy in the car, be sure they have his leash, a few toys, water and a water bowl, some good treats and a chewie or two close at hand. Depending upon the length of the trip, someone may need to occupy the puppy for quite a while so having many options will make the time pass more quickly.

Although we are big fans of crating dogs in cars, the only exception we make is when pups are on their way home. Most puppies get quite frightened if they are crated alone in the back of a strange vehicle. Instead, we recommend owners either have a passenger hold the puppy or put a crate on the front seat, facing the driver. That way the puppy knows it hasn't been abandoned and can be comforted during the trip.

Cool it down

Just as with your trips with the litter, puppies usually do best in a cool car, relatively speaking. Obviously larger and more coated puppies will need a cooler environment than toy and/or short-coated pups. But don't let your owners put a puppy in a hot car for the trip home.

Saying Goodbye Quickly

Be aware of the puppy's behavior as the new owners are getting ready to leave. Make your goodbyes quick if the puppy is settled and quiet. By now you probably have a rapport with the new owners and could spend quite a bit of time talking with them but if the puppy looks ready to crash, politely get your buyers moving! A good sendoff can be ruined by chatting too long when the puppy is tired, ending up with a puppy travelling when it is awake. So sending them off when the puppy will sleep in the car right away is the best way to get the trip started.



Be sure to say goodbye when the puppy is ready

For your Puppy Buyers

We have prepared two individual ebooks, *Driving Home With Your Puppy* and *Flying Home With Your Puppy* to help make the trip easier for everyone. The ebooks are included on the following pages for you but we ask that you have your puppy buyers download their own copy by sending them this link: <https://www.avidog.com/the-puppy-sendoff/>



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2 Driving Home With Your Puppy!

The Scouts' motto, "Be Prepared" holds true for being successful with most things in life. Knowing what to expect and how to handle what happens as you travel home with your puppy will help make your pup's first trip with you the best experience possible.

We have gathered our own lessons learned as well as those of our puppy buyers and put them together in this hand-out. Our goal is to help make your trip home with your new puppy as easy as possible for both of you. Knowing what to bring, how to prepare in advance and what to do while traveling will go a long way in making the trip a good one.



It always helps to be prepared

Gather Your Gear Ahead of Time

You don't need a lot of gear but your trip home with your new puppy will be easier and safer if you have a few items with you. You can borrow some from dog-loving friends, buy them online via the links we've given you here, or get them at your local pet store. We've put in bold those items we think are essential that you have not only for your trip but for your first weeks with your puppy.

- Someone to hold the puppy on the trip home or a **puppy-sized crate**
- **Collar** and **leash**, be sure the collar fits the puppy snugly so you can't lose your puppy on the trip home
- **Water** and **water bowl**
- **Treats**, small, healthy goodies (use coupon code AVIDOG20 for 20% OFF bags, bulk, and rawhides)
- **Paper towels**
- **Snuggle Puppy** or other large, soft toy for puppy to snuggle with
- **Chews**, such as **stuffed Kongs**, **bully straps**, **pig's ears** and **marrow bones** (use coupon code AVIDOG20 for 20% OFF bags, bulk, and rawhides)
- **Baggies for potty cleanup**

If you are bringing your puppy home in a crate:

- **Crate pad**—get an inexpensive, washable crate pad that is the correct size for the crate.
- A **bed sheet** large enough to fully cover the crate

If you are staying in a hotel on the trip home:

- **Enzymatic cleaner**, such as **Nature's Miracle** or **Simple Solution**
- **Wee wee pads**

Setting the car up for success!

You can help your puppy relax and fall asleep in the car by creating a comfortable environment. If you are traveling with someone else for a short distance, it is all right to have your passenger hold the puppy on his or her lap. However some puppies don't like to be restrained for long periods of time so would be happier in a crate even for a short trip. Best to be prepared for both and then you can choose which will work best. For traveling longer distances you definitely should have a crate set up in the car.

Locating the crate

- If you are traveling alone, secure the crate on the front passenger's seat with a seatbelt. Face the door of the crate toward you so the puppy can easily see you and you can talk to her.
- If you are traveling with someone, secure the crate in the middle of the back seat so your passenger can reach around and stick a finger into the crate to comfort her if needed. (Now is not the time to train the puppy to be quiet in her crate.)
- If your puppy cannot see you from the back seat, one person should sit in the back to be near the puppy.



Crate on in back seat ready for pup

CAUTION: A common error people make is putting the puppy's crate in the back of the car for the trip home. Since this is the first time your puppy is by herself in your car, the puppy is likely to feel abandoned and alone all the way in the back. The puppy will start howling, barking and crying.

This crying is not necessarily about being in a crate but instead is the puppy doing the "lost puppy" cry so that her mom or littermate can find her. This is very stressful for the puppy and can contribute to car sickness and fear of cars. In addition, it can be pretty loud. To avoid this stress on both you and your puppy be sure the puppy is close to you when you are traveling home.

Motion

Many puppies have a difficult time settling into a crate in the car as the world whizzes by them! Your pup will likely settle more easily if you place the crate low in the car so she cannot see things moving or you can cover the sides of her crate with a sheet. Be sure to fold back the sheet on the side of the crate that faces you so she does not feel isolated from you.



Temperature of the vehicle

When puppies are hot you will know it because they cry, move around and cannot get comfortable. And puppies are often hot when the temperature is comfortable for us. Even if you are traveling in the dead of winter, be prepared to keep the car cool. Bring something warm to wear for each non-doggie passenger in the car and keep the temperature in the car cooler than you would probably like in order to allow your pup to be comfortable. If your puppy is crying during the trip, and you know she does not have to potty, she likely is hot.



Be prepared to stay warm

Preparing the crate for the trip

Getting the crate ready for travel is important! Add each of the following items to the crate BEFORE putting the puppy in:

- An inexpensive crate pad or blanket placed on the bottom of the crate so the puppy won't slide around.
- A larger stuffed toy that has the scent of familiar dogs/puppies on it. The beating heart and warm pack in a Snuggle Puppy make it a great choice for traveling. Let the puppies play with your Snuggle Puppy and rub it on the puppy's mother to pick up their scents.
- One or two things for the pup to chew on.
 - Pigs' ears or bully straps are a good size and weight
 - The chewy should be easy for your puppy to chew, so now is not the time for a giant smoked knuckle bone. You want the puppy to be able to pick up the chewy and move to the other side of the crate with it.
- A few small toys for the puppy to play with.
 - A soft toy
 - A small ball or rubber squeaky toy
- Toss in a few treats that they can find on their own when you put them in the crate.
 - If you use fresh treats toss them in just before you place the puppy in the crates they don't spoil.
- Do not put water in the crate itself. During this trip you need to monitor how much water your puppy is drinking so you won't have to stop too frequently. Be sure she has had access to water before you leave and then offer her some water every few hours, without letting her drink too much water at one time.



Crate—Paige in car

Documentation

You may need health and bill of sale documentation from the breeder on your trip, depending upon your destination. At a minimum, be sure you have a health certificate from your breeder's veterinarian. Typically a certificate issued within 10 days of travel is acceptable for most travel but you should check with your airline to confirm this. Keep the documents in an easily-accessible place—do not pack it with your luggage because you may need to produce it on the trip.

If you are crossing an international border check with your breeder to be sure you have the appropriate importation documents. (And be sure your passport is up to date!)

When to get on the road

I learned a lot from my sister-in-law as I watched her do an amazing job raising five young children. What struck a chord for me was you do things when the timing is right for the kids, not for you. The same is true for puppies, so be ready to leave when the time is right for the puppy! Ideally you want to get on the road when:

- The puppy has had lots of exercise, running and playing with her littermates or you, and is ready to crash! Remember tired puppies make the best travel companions!
- The puppy has gone to the bathroom recently. Don't assume because you have been outside sitting in the grass enjoying the litter and chatting with the breeder that your puppy has gone to the bathroom recently. Keep an eye on her and be aware of the last time she pottied.
- The puppy has preferably not eaten a meal in the last hour or two, if possible, to avoid any carsickness.
- The car is completely packed—all you have to do is put the puppy in the car and drive away! If the puppy is settled and quiet, avoid long goodbyes and get moving right away!

It is not always possible to time the above list perfectly, but keep these things in mind to enable you and your breeder to get you off on your trip at the right time.

Meals

If you are traveling for more than three hours, prepare individual meals in easy-to-use, disposable containers so you can feed your puppy on the trip. If you feed raw, package the food in throw-away containers so you don't have to deal with messy food bowls.

Keep the bag with the pup's things easily accessible as you pack the car. It's amazing how often the bag you need most winds up at the bottom of the pile if you don't plan your packing in advance.



Raw food ready to travel and water dish

Potting the puppy

Your puppy should be able to go about two hours between potty breaks, if she pottied just before you left. If you are traveling longer than that we've put together a few tips to help you and your pup have success with safely pottying your pup while traveling:

- When your puppy wakes up she will need most likely need to potty very quickly so look for a rest area after she's been asleep for 45-60 minutes.
- If your puppy is screaming in the car and you are not sure if she needs to go, believe her! She likely has to potty.
- Try to find a place away from traffic to set her down. Be sure she is on leash!
- If you must stop on the side of the road be SURE your puppy cannot slip out of her collar no matter how hard she pulls on it! This is good advice at any time but is critical when your puppy is in a brand new place with people she barely knows!



Office parks are safe places to potty your puppy

- Do your best to get off the highway at either an exit or rest stop. If you have to go to a rest stop DO NOT take her to the “dog walk” areas. She has not been fully vaccinated and must be kept away from areas where unknown dogs go to the bathroom. Instead find an out-of-the way grassy area to set your puppy down. Avoid any dog feces you see no matter where you are walking her.
- The safest place to potty your puppy is at an office or industrial park. Find some grass in an area that would not likely have had other dogs around and set her down on leash.
- Once she has gone, praise her and give her some treats.
- Be sure to clean up after your puppy!



3 Flying Home With Your Puppy!

The Scouts' motto, "Be Prepared" holds true for being successful with most things in life. Knowing what to expect and how to handle what happens as you travel home with your puppy will help make your pup's first trip with you the best experience possible.

Thinking about flying a puppy as carry-on luggage can be stressful but with proper preparation, both you and your puppy can have a great trip. Your puppy will get wonderful socialization in the airport and during the flight and you will know your pup has been well taken care of onboard.

We have been sending pups home in airplane cabins for nearly two decades so have a lot of experience. We have gathered our own lessons learned as well as those of our puppy buyers in this handout. Our goal is to help make your trip home with your new puppy as easy as possible for both of you. Knowing what to bring, how to prepare in advance and what to do while traveling will go a long way in making the trip a good one.



Reservations

Call the airline as soon as possible to make a reservation for you and your puppy. It is best to call the airline for this reservation so you can ensure they know about your puppy and you can get the most up-to-date information on the airlines requirements for documents, travel crates, etc. Most airlines limit the number of animals allowed on each flight to be sure to book your flight early if you have a small window of travel available.



Book your flight early!

Documentation

You will need specific documentation, a health certificate and perhaps a bill of sale, for your flight with your puppy. Coordinate with your breeder to be sure you have everything you need for the flight.

- Be sure you have a health certificate from your breeder's veterinarian establishing that your puppy is healthy and listing the vaccinations your puppy has received. Typically a certificate issued within 10 days of travel is acceptable for airline travel but you should check with your airline to confirm this.
- Keep the certificate in an easily-accessible place—do not pack it with your luggage because you will need to produce it at the airport.
- If you are importing your puppy to another country or crossing an international border, check with each government's agency and your breeder to be sure you have the appropriate documents. (And be sure your passport is up to date if you are traveling across a border.) You also may need to show a bill of sale and pay duty, depending upon the country.



Official documents

Gather Your Gear Ahead of Time

Since you are flying with your pup, you need more gear than you would if you were driving.

- **Sherpa pet carrier.** Get a Sherpa with the most ventilation and a two-sided bottom with both vinyl and fleece.
- **Collar and leash,** be sure the collar fits the puppy snugly so you can't lose your puppy on the trip home
- **Potty Packs** consisting of the following in a one-gallon Ziploc bag:
 - One **Wee wee pad**
 - Three paper towels, folded individually

- A snack-sized Ziploc bag of pellets, shavings or whatever the breeder used as potty litter for the puppies
- **Small, battery-powered fan**
- **Treats**, take a variety of healthy, tasty treats that do not need refrigeration (use coupon code AVIDOG20 for 20% OFF bags, bulk, and rawhides)
- **Water container**. A small, sealable container for water, such as a Tupperware or Ziploc container. Remember, buy your bottle of water AFTER you get through Security so it won't be confiscated on the way through.
- **Chews**. Get a few puppy-sized chewies, such as **stuffed Kongs**, **bully straps**, **pig's ears** and **marrow bones**. If you are traveling internationally, be sure you know the importation rules for bringing chews into the country.
- **Comforting smells**. A soft toy and/or towel that has the scent of your puppy's mom and littermates on it.
- **Cooling bags**. Four to six quart-sized Ziploc bags that you can have the flight attendant fill with ice, then double bag them and put them in the Sherpa to keep the puppy cool.
- **Benadryl tablets**, split into the appropriate size for your puppy. Benadryl makes most puppies drowsy so tends to make the flight go more smoothly. Give the first dose 30 minutes before you take off and then every 6-8 hours thereafter. We give our 10-12 pound puppies ½ Benadryl every 6 hours. Check with your veterinarian to find out what the correct dose would be for your puppy.
- **Meals**. If you are traveling for more than three hours, have prepared meals in individual containers so you can easily feed your puppy on the trip. If you are feeding raw, pack-age the food in throw-away containers so you don't have to deal with messy food bowls.
- **Baggies for potty cleanup** at or on the way to the airport.

Sherpa Bags

Puppies that fly as carry-on baggage must be contained in small crates, typically Sherpa bags. Sherpas are small soft-sided crates designed to fit under the seat on a plane. There are other brands of soft-sided crates that can be used, but before buying one make sure it complies with airline regulations for carry-on luggage.

It is also best to purchase a simple, light-weight luggage cart that you can strap the Sherpa to for long hauls through the airport.

If you are using your own **Sherpa bag**, ask your breeder if you can send it to her ahead of time so she can get your new puppy accustomed to it. Even if she does not, you can quickly condition your pup to the Sherpa if you arrive at the breeder's a day ahead of time.

Condition Your Puppy to the Sherpa

Start by making the Sherpa smell familiar. Put it in the puppy pen for a few hours but monitor the puppies to ensure they do not damage it. You want it to smell like your pup's mom, litter-mates and home.

Next, condition your puppy to the Sherpa. This is a quick process that can be done in a few sessions. Spend just a few minutes on each step and progress as the puppy is comfortable. Talk quietly to the puppy and allow her to see you. Pet her through the unzipped top or through the mesh sides of the Sherpa.

- **Step One**

- Place the Sherpa on the floor or a table so it will not move when you place the puppy inside.
- Open all of the flaps—top and ends, if the Sherpa has both.
- Toss a handful of REALLY GOOD treats inside the bag.
- Open the top flap as wide as it will go and place the puppy in the bag leaving the flap open.
- Allow her to eat the treats, showing them to her if necessary.
- Toss in additional treats while she is in the bag.
- Continue to toss in treats for 2-3 minutes.
- Take her out of the bag. Don't give her any treats after she has been removed from the bag.

- **Step Two**

- Repeat the step above continuing to treat her for 4-6 minutes before taking her out of the bag.
- While she is eating, stroke her across her back.

● Step Three

- Repeat Step Two but zip the bag closed about half way continuing to toss treats into the bag for 1-3 minutes before taking her out of the bag.

● Step Four

- Repeat Step Three, but now zip the Sherpa bag until it is completely closed and allow the puppy to eat the treats.
- While she is eating, unzip the bag just enough to drop in additional treats. Be sure not to let her escape from the bag.
- Continue to add treats zipping and unzipping the bag for 1-3 minutes.
- Unzip the bag and take her out. Don't give her any treats after she has been removed from the bag.



Remember to only give treats while she is in the travel bag

● Step Five

- Repeat the Step Four, dropping in lots of amazing treats and zip the bag completely closed.
- Pick up the bag being sure to hold it horizontally so she can keep her balance.
- Slowly walk around the room with the bag.
- Stop walking and set the bag down so you can unzip the bag just enough to drop in additional treats. Again, be sure not to let her escape from the bag. Remember while she is in the bag you can quietly reassure her.
- Walk around the room for 5-10 minutes stopping to reward her with treats and praise. If the puppy is relaxed you can unzip the top to pet her and scratch her head.
- Take her out when she is calm and relaxed. If she is upset, unzip the top and put your hand in to pet and stroke her. Wait for her to calm down before taking her out.
- Remember not to reward the puppy with treats after she has been removed from the bag.

Using Potty Packs

Take the stress out of pottyng your puppy in the airport and onboard the plane by having potty packs ready. Your breeder may supply you with potty packs but if she doesn't, make some yourself. How many you need depends upon the length of your flight(s): for flights less than six hours, take two packs. For those over six hours, take three to four.

To use a potty pack, put the wee-wee pad on the ground in a bathroom stall and sprinkle the litter on it. Keep the puppy on leash while encouraging her to potty on the pad. Wait patiently since puppies often are distracted when you first put them down in a new place.

Once the puppy potties, fold up the used wee-wee pad and put it in the Ziploc bag. Use the paper towels to clean up any mess. Toss them in the bag, seal it and dispose of everything in the bathroom trash container.

What to expect on the flight

What should you expect when you fly with a puppy in the cabin? Much of your trip will be similar to any other airline flight. After arriving at the airport but before going inside, try to potty your puppy. Then check in at the normal airline counter before making your way through security. At the counter, you may need to show your pup's health certificate to the airline personnel.

At security, you will have to remove your puppy so the Sherpa can be x-rayed. Then you will go to and wait at the gate until your flight is called. While moving through the airport, your pup should be in the Sherpa bag but once at the gate, you can take her out for some playtime and relaxation. Keep an eye on her in case she needs to potty. If she does, use your potty packs (see above) to keep the airport clean. It's usually best to go to the restroom to get her to potty.



Take her to the restroom if you think she needs to potty

We recommend giving puppies a dose of normal, human Benadryl about 30 minutes before boarding the plane. Benadryl makes most puppies very sleepy so will help the pup nap throughout the flight. Check with your vet regarding the correct dosage for your puppy.

Once onboard, your puppy will need to be in a closed Sherpa bag, at least during take-off and landing. Occasionally, kind flight attendants will let you hold her on your lap during the rest of the flight but that is rare. However, you should be able open the top of the Sherpa bag so you can pet, reassure and take care of your pup.

The biggest challenge for puppies on airplanes is heat. Hot puppies are miserable and often very loud so do what you can to keep your puppy cool. To safely cool your puppy, put her leash on so she doesn't get loose and open the top of the Sherpa bag. Then, direct the overhead air vent into it.

Ask the flight attendants to fill some double-bagged, Ziploc bags with ice and place them in or around the Sherpa. If your puppy has a heavy coat, direct a small, battery-powered fan into the Sherpa.

Keep your puppy occupied during the flight with chewies, meals and water. If she starts to get restless, she may need to potty so grab a potty pack and head to the restroom. Put the wee-wee pad on the floor and sprinkle the litter on it. Encourage her to potty on the pad. Wait patiently since puppies often are distracted when you first put them down in a new place.

Once she potties, fold up the used wee-wee pad and put it in the Ziploc bag. Use the paper towels to clean up any mess. Toss them in the bag, seal it and dispose of everything in the trash container.

That's about it except expect to be the most popular person in the airport with your new pup. Passengers love to meet puppies while they wait for their planes. Flying is a great experience for your pup so enjoy the trip!



Bring your travel pack to let her potty

When to get on the road for the airport

I learned a lot from my sister-in-law as I watched her do an amazing job raising five children. What struck a chord for me was you do things when the timing is right for the kids, not for you. The same is true for puppies, so be ready to leave when the time is right for the puppy!

Ideally you want to get on the road when:

- The puppy has had lots of exercise, running and playing with her littermates and is ready to crash! Remember tired puppies make the best travel companions!
- The puppy has gone to the bathroom recently. Don't assume because you have been outside sitting in the grass enjoying the litter and chatting with the breeder that your puppy has gone to the bathroom recently. Keep an eye on her and be aware of the last time she pottied.
- The puppy has not eaten a meal in the last hour or two to avoid any carsickness.
- The car or taxi is completely packed—all you have to do is put the puppy in the car and drive away! If the puppy is settled and quiet, avoid long goodbyes and get moving right away!



Get on the road when the puppy is tired

It is not always possible to time the above list perfectly, but keeping these things in mind you and your breeder can do your best to get off at the right time.

Setting the car or taxi up for success!

Since you are likely driving to the airport, you'll also need to know how to help your puppy have a good car experience. You can help your puppy relax and fall asleep in the car by creating a comfortable environment. If you are traveling with someone else, it is all right to have your passenger hold the puppy on his or her lap. However some puppies don't like to be restrained for long periods of time so would be happier in the Sherpa even for a short trip. Best to be prepared for both and then you can choose which will work best.

Locating the Sherpa

If you are traveling alone, secure the Sherpa on the front passenger's seat with a seatbelt. If you are traveling with someone, they can hold the Sherpa on their laps or sit in the back seat with the puppy in the Sherpa.

CAUTION: A common error people make is putting the puppy's Sherpa in the back of the car. Since this is the first time your puppy is by herself in the car, the puppy is likely to feel abandoned and alone all the way in the back. The puppy will start howling, barking and crying.

This crying is not necessarily about being in the Sherpa but instead is the puppy doing the "lost puppy" cry so that her mom or littermate can find her. This is very stressful for the puppy and can contribute to car sickness and fear of cars. In addition, it can be pretty loud. To avoid this stress on both you and your puppy be sure the puppy is close to you when you are traveling home.

Motion

Many puppies have a difficult time settling into a Sherpa in the car as the world whizzes by them! Your pup will likely settle more easily if you place the Sherpa low in the car so she cannot see things moving by her.



Temperature of the vehicle

When puppies are hot you will know it because they cry, move around and cannot get comfortable. And puppies are often hot when the temperature is comfortable for us. Even if you are traveling in the dead of winter, be prepared to keep the car cool. Bring something warm to wear for each non-doggie passenger in the car and keep the temperature in the car cooler than you would probably like in order to allow your pup to be comfortable. If your puppy is crying during the trip, and you know she does not have to potty, she likely is hot.



Be sure to dress warmly so you can keep the puppy comfortable

Meals

If you are traveling for more than three hours, prepare individual meals in easy-to-use, disposable containers so you can feed your puppy on the trip. If you feed raw, package the food in throw-away containers so you don't have to deal with messy food bowls.

Keep the bag with the pup's things easily accessible as you pack the car. It's amazing how often the bag you need most winds up at the bottom of the pile if you don't plan your packing in advance.



Raw food ready to travel and water dish

Potting the puppy

Your puppy should be able to go about two hours between potty breaks, if she pottied just before you left. If you are traveling longer than that on your way to the airport we've put together a few tips to help you and your pup have success with safely pottying your pup while traveling:

- When your puppy wakes up she will need most likely need to potty very quickly so look for a rest area after she's been asleep for 45-60 minutes.
- If your puppy is screaming in the car and you are not sure if she needs to go, believe her! She likely has to potty.
- Try to find a place away from traffic to set her down. Be sure she is on leash!
- If you must stop on the side of the road be SURE your puppy cannot slip out of her collar no matter how hard she pulls on it! This is good advice at any time but is critical when your puppy is in a brand new place with people she barely knows!
- Do your best to get off the highway at either an exit or rest stop. If you have to go to a rest stop DO NOT take her to the "dog walk" areas. She has not been fully vaccinated and must be kept away from areas where unknown dogs go to the bathroom. Instead find an out-of-the way grassy area to set your puppy down. Avoid any dog feces you see no matter where you are walking her.
- The safest place to potty your puppy is at an office or industrial park. Find some grass in an area that would not likely have had other dogs around and set her down on leash.
- Once she has gone, praise her and give her some treats.
- Be sure to clean up after your puppy!



Look for a place that you would not typically find other dogs to potty your puppy

Preparing the Sherpa for the trip

Getting the Sherpa ready for the trip to the airport is important! Add each of the following items to the Sherpa BEFORE putting the puppy in:

- Be sure the pad is in the Sherpa so the puppy won't slide around.
- A small stuffed toy or towel that has the scent of familiar dogs/puppies on it. Before leaving the breeder's, let the puppies play with the toy and rub it on the puppy's mother to pick up her scent.
- One or two things for the pup to chew on.
 - Pigs' ears or bully straps are a good size and weight
 - The chewy should be easy for your puppy to chew, so now is not the time for a giant smoked knuckle bone. You want the puppy to be able to pick up the chewy and move to the other side of the Sherpa with it.
- Toss in a handful of good treats that she can find on her own before you put her in the crate.
- Do not put water in the Sherpa. During this trip you need to monitor how much water your puppy is drinking so you won't have to stop too frequently. Be sure she has had access to water before you leave and then offer her some water every few hours, without letting her drink too much water at one time.



We hope this information will make the sendoff easier for your buyers and their puppies!

Be sure to send them to <https://www.avidog.com/the-puppy-sendoff/> to get their copy of the ebook to help them on their way.

We wish everyone a safe trip!

Gayle, Lise and Marcy
Your Avidog® Team



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