

## Set-up & Loading a Cat Transport

Cats should not be transported in the same manner as dogs, or in the same vehicle compartment, and accommodations should be made to minimize environmental stress during transport. Stress can cause issues such as upper respiratory and other concerns, so by keeping the stress level to a minimum you will be able to reduce the incidents of stress-related illnesses. The following protocol will help cats relax during travel and reduce fear and stress behaviors.



### Once Cats are Selected for Transport

- When the cats are identified for transport, provide them with a comfort item such as a towel, blanket, or an old t-shirt along with disposable food and water bowls in their shelter housing unit. These items will stay with them for the remainder of the time at your shelter and will accompany the cat during transport.
- Having these familiar items during transport can help reduce stress, and the items should only be removed if they are heavily soiled. On arrival at the destination shelter, these items can be placed in their assigned kennel until they are comfortable in their new surroundings.

### Day Before Transport

- The day before transport, cats and their comfort items should be loaded into the transport crates. Loading the cat the night before allows them to acclimate to the crate before the trip.
- Select a transport crate large enough to comfortably accommodate the cat and the recommended items. Set up each transport crate by:
  - Placing a strip of masking, painters, or duct tape above the crate door. Write the cat's name and ID number, making sure it matches the information on the cat's disposable collar.
  - Assemble a cardboard litter box and add a handful of litter.
  - Place a puppy pad in the bottom of the crate and position the litter box in the back.
  - Add the disposable bowls and the comfort item.
- Once the transport crate is ready for the intended cat bring the labeled crate to the cat's shelter housing unit and double-check that their ID collar is in place and matches the name (ID number) written on the tape. Then gently load the cat in the crate and ensure the door is latched. Take care to keep the crate as level as possible to prevent the cat from shifting in the crate on the way to the holding area.
- Be sure to keep the transport crates in a climate-controlled, quiet area of your facility, like an office, hallway, or conference room. This area should minimize the opportunities for escape if a cat leaves the crate unexpectedly. If available, use a pheromone diffuser in the area to support the cats as they adjust to their new surroundings.

## Day of Transport

- Remove the litter boxes and spot-clean the kennels prior to loading them on the transport vehicle.
- Ensure the ID collars are in place, well fitted and legible.
- Remove water from the bowls to avoid spillage when transferring to the vehicle.
- Add fresh food.

## Loading the Vehicle

- Designate two staff members or volunteers to move each crate. A flat rolling cart can be used to ensure the cat has a smooth transition.
- Carefully load the crates into the transport vehicle. Take care to keep the crate as level as possible and avoid carrying by the handle as this can create instability, cause the cat to slip and exacerbate stress.
- Safely and securely fasten each crate into the vehicle. Crates should not move when pulled if they are correctly restrained.
- Check out the Dog Set-up and Loading video on ASPCApro for tips on safely securing transport crates.