



## Info Sheet

felinefriendsnetwork.org  
email: [contact@felinefriendsnetwork.org](mailto:contact@felinefriendsnetwork.org)  
helpline: (650) 566-8287

---

## Moving by Car With Your Cat

*Things to keep handy for use:*

- Small litterbox (tin meat pans work well as disposable) filled with litter
- Scoop & garbage bag for dirty litter
- Water (preferably home water, cats won't drink strange water. Start giving your cat bottled water a few weeks before the trip so you can buy bottled water on the way)
- Food - tupperware containers make great dishes because you can close them up
- Towels to line carrier (may need changing in case of 'accidents'!)
- Windshield sunshade for parking
- In hot climates or weather, water sprayer and/or battery-operated fan for cooling him down if necessary (see HEAT STROKE below)

## On the Trip

\* Use a large, sturdy plastic carrier, with a towel draped over it to keep it dark and prevent your cat from seeing outside. He will sleep better if he doesn't see what is going on outside. The cardboard ones are unsafe because the cat can escape, are usually not big enough for a comfortable nap, and get hot over time.

\* If there is space in the car, you can also use a small dog crate, providing more space.

\* Place a small litterbox in the back of the carrier, a small tin roasting pan or a suitable shaped plastic tub works well. Bring a few spares for quick changes (tin roasting pans can be tossed away.) Don't open the carrier to change the litter unless the doors and windows are closed and locked!

\* Always keep him locked in the carrier unless the car doors are closed and locked (so no one can suddenly open the door from outside), and the windows up. I have heard many stories of cats escaping at rest stops and getting lost at a rest stop never to be found!

\* If you stay at a hotel/motel, don't let the cat out of the carrier until you have checked the room - windows closed or very strong screens, no holes or air vents he could get into, holes under the bed or dressers, etc. It may be best to keep him in the bathroom anyway, easier to catch in the morning! Place a 'do not disturb' sign on the door and deadbolt it so no one opens it and lets him out.



## Info Sheet

felinefriendsnetwork.org  
email: [contact@felinefriendsnetwork.org](mailto:contact@felinefriendsnetwork.org)  
helpline: (650) 566-8287

\* He probably won't eat, drink or use litterbox at rest stops. Most cats will not do so until staying at a motel or at the destination. On a long trip or in hot weather, try to get him to drink by putting drops of water on his lips, or offer canned food (you can get those little mini-cans with the pull-top lids).

\* Put a collar and tag with one or two phone numbers of friends or your cell phone if you have one, including area codes. Bring with you a photo in case he got lost and you had to look for him and show people pictures.

\* Bring your vet's phone number with you, in case you need emergency advice, even long distance.

\* Make sure the your cat does not get overheated in the car - park in the shade, put a sunscreen in the windows, and preferably do not leave him unattended. Cars can reach 150 degrees in a few minutes in even moderate weather. If you drive with someone, take turns going in to use restrooms and get food, so that the door can be kept open to keep him cool. If you go alone, you may be able to bring him inside with you in the carrier.

**HEAT STROKE:** Heat stroke begins with noisy, rapid breathing. The tongue and mucous membranes appear bright red, saliva thickens, and the cat may vomit. Body temperature rises, often to over 106 degrees (ears will feel hot to the touch). The cat may stagger. Bloody diarrhea can occur. If untreated, coma and subsequent death may result. Immediate cooling with water is the initial treatment. Lower the body temperature as quickly as possible by spraying, sponging, or dunking your pet in cold water, or by using ice packs. Get to a veterinarian as quickly as possible.

If the cat starts to pant heavily due to heat, use a damp cloth or spray bottle to wet him down (close car doors and windows before opening carrier - spray bottle may work through carrier vents). You may want to buy a small battery-operated fan for the trip, if you anticipate hot weather. There are small fans available that attach to carrier doors. Panting does not necessarily mean heatstroke. If it's not too hot, cats may pant anyway because of stress, there is not much you can do about that.

### At the New Home

\* When you arrive, it is best to set up the cat in a small room such as a bathroom or guest room – one you will not be moving things into right away. Set up the food, water, and litter. Check the room to make sure the windows are closed or the screens are very strong (test them by pushing all around the frame). Remove any potential poisons or



## Info Sheet

felinefriendsnetwork.org  
email: [contact@felinefriendsnetwork.org](mailto:contact@felinefriendsnetwork.org)  
helpline: (650) 566-8287

---

dangers. Then put the carrier on the floor and open the door, leaving the cat to emerge on his own.

- \* Cats are often very upset by moving, because they are territory-oriented. You may expect the cat to hide and act frightened in unfamiliar surroundings, and you need to be extra careful not to let him get outside.
- \* Set up your furniture and do all your major moving around of belongings before you let the cat out of the room he is staying in. This will help avoid accidents and also be less frightening to the cat.
- \* Check your new home thoroughly before letting the cat out of the room. Make sure doors and windows are secure, and any unsafe items are removed. Check for rat poison in backs of cupboards, etc.