

## ***Things to Consider Before You Transport Animals***

*As new animal relocation partners, having clear and realistic expectations for the roles and duties of each agency before the trip begins is very important. Here are some things that must be considered:*

1. Who are the people involved with the transport and what are their responsibilities?

a. SOURCE shelter: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Contact Person

who can make decisions before and during transport (eg- a Branch Manager or Senior

Animal Care Staff): \_\_\_\_\_

Work# \_\_\_\_\_ Cell/ER# \_\_\_\_\_

*Recommendation:* This person should be responsible for the selection of the animals to be transported and present during loading. They should have a very clear understanding of the types of animals accepted by the source shelter, and be available by phone during the entire transport. They will have already been in repeated contact with their equivalent person at the Receiving Agency.

b. DESTINATION shelter \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Contact Person

who can make any necessary decisions as the animals arrive at the new Agency:

\_\_\_\_\_

Work# \_\_\_\_\_ Cell/ER# \_\_\_\_\_

*Recommendation:* This person will have already been in direct contact with the source shelter contact and give clear guidelines for the types of animals accepted by their organization. They should be present during the unloading of the animals and have the authority to make animal disposition decisions (place animal in ISO, take to veterinarian, euthanize, etc.)

c. TRANSPORTER \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Work# \_\_\_\_\_ Cell/ER# \_\_\_\_\_

*Recommendation:* This person should have adequate animal care experience to identify an animal in distress and be able to give basic first aid. They should know

when and how to contact an emergency veterinarian on the road. They should have a credit card for animal medical or vehicle emergencies, and should remain in contact with the source and destination shelters during the trip.

2. When is “ownership” transferred to the destination shelter? Can the destination shelter refuse to take an animal?
  - a. *Recommendation:* Typically, ownership should transfer upon arrival and evaluation of the animals at the destination shelter. If a situation arises where an animal does not meet the adoption criteria of the destination shelter (i.e. failed behavior exam, illness, etc.) a disposition determination needs to be jointly agreed upon by the contacts of both shelters.
    - i. If the transport distance is less than 150 kms, an option would be to return the animal to the source shelter.
    - ii. If the transport is long distance, making it a hardship on the animal or transporter to return to the source shelter, then the destination should agree to accept all animals delivered and provide any necessary reasonable care to the animal aligning with their typical procedures (i.e. place the dog with kennel cough in ISO for treatment, or observe the dog demonstrating aggressive behaviors for 24hrs, etc.) *NOTE: Any decision to euthanize a transported animal should be discussed previously with the contact at the source shelter -- or if the animal is suffering should be under the direct advisement of a veterinarian.*
  - b. Before the transport, an animal transfer of ownership agreement should be signed by both shelters.

3. What happens if an animal has a medical emergency during the trip?

*Recommendation:* The transporter should first contact the person from the source Agency for a course of action as the animal is still the property of the source Agency at this point. Then, if they agree, the transporter will consult the nearest veterinarian. Since the ownership has not been transferred over to the destination shelter (that happens upon arrival), the financial responsibility should be placed on the source shelter. The transporter should be prepared to locate and pay for veterinary care, then seek reimbursement from the source shelter.

4. How long will the animals be on the road? How often will they be allowed to rest, be fed, get watered, walked, etc.?

*Recommendation:* If the trip is longer than 8 hours, the dogs must be exercised and allowed to relieve themselves every 4-6 hours. Rest locations will be planned in advance to ensure a safe area for walking is found. Water should be available at all times or at least every 4 hours. Animals under 6 months of age should be fed every 4-6 hours or more often if needed. *NOTE:* Any trip should not exceed 12 hours per day.

5. What size crates will be used for each animal and which, if any, will be allowed to share a kennel?

*Recommendation:* The crates must be large enough for the animal to lie down, sit, and stand in a natural position. Animals should not share a crate unless it is a female with offspring, or when there is a behavioral benefit and only if the crate size allows for the above criteria without having to lie on top of each other.

6. Do all of the animals need a health certificate and a rabies shot?

*Recommendation:* All animals that are being transported must be healthy and not demonstrating signs of illness. As late as the time of loading, an animal should be removed from the transport pool if they begin to show signs of illness or distress. If the animals are traveling across provincial lines, or leaving the country they must have a current rabies shot and health certificate. NOTE: Provincial laws vary regarding animal transport (eg- condition of vehicle), so research regulations thoroughly before beginning the transport.

7. Are all of the animals identified and are their crates labeled? How is their paperwork transported?

*Recommendation:* All animals should have a collar with ID tag or a temporary Identi-band with handwritten ID number. Each crate should be numbered and the occupant ID number labeled. If animals are moving between Agencies that share the same shelter management software system, only a summary printed sheet would need to accompany the animal as the records can be transferred between the source and receiving Agency electronically. Otherwise, each animal's completed medical history, health certificate, behavior exam results, etc. should be placed in a plastic sheet protector with cover sheet listing the crate number. All the paperwork should be placed in a 3-ring binder and delivered with the animals