

# Bishop's Move guide to moving pets

in association with the Blue Cross Animal Welfare Charity



Moving house can be stressful for family pets as well as for humans, but just a little thought and forward planning can help to make the whole business much less stressful and confusing for them.

## Preparation

You can minimise the anxiety all round by making sure you prepare everything for your pets in advance of moving to your new home.

- Cats and dogs may wonder what on earth is going on with packing cases and chaos around, so take the time to reassure them and give them some extra care and attention. Try to keep your pets to their usual routine as much as possible leading up to the move. You may need to keep cats inside for the last few days leading up to a move to prevent them from disappearing because of all the upheaval. Cats, particularly, may find it very difficult to cope with moving to a new territory and you may experience a few problems with them until they settle down. Dogs are usually more adaptable and are likely to settle wherever their owners are happy.
- **ID** – Make sure that all cats and dogs are micro chipped (ask your veterinary surgeon) and have an identification tag or collar (snap-open collars seem to be the safest), or leg bands for birds, which carries your name and destination address just in case they disappear during the move or when you arrive at your new home.
- **Vets** – You will need to find a new vet in the area you are moving to, so ask your vendors or new neighbours for recommendations, look in Yellow Pages, or take a look at Vet Finder on the web site [www.petsonthebrain.com](http://www.petsonthebrain.com) which will locate vets in your new postcode area. Remember to ask for your pet records to be sent from your old vet to the new one.
- It's a good idea to find out good walking places for your dog in advance so you can get into a new routine as soon as possible. Again, you can ask your vendor, new neighbours, estate agent or get hold of a local Ordnance Survey map.

- Take a look around the garden at your new house and see where there are escape routes for your dog. You may need to block up any gaps, or even consider putting up a new fence. Don't let your dog out into the garden until the fences are secure. If he does escape, he will not know the area well enough to find his way back and may get completely lost. Buy a new chew and toy to give to them at the new house.
- Ask neighbours about the local cat population to find out if there are any difficult cats in the area that may cause your cat trouble or any neighbours who dislike cats and may be unkind to them.



## On The Day

- Don't allow cats to go outside, or they could do a disappearing act at the 11th hour.
- Keep cats and dogs in one room while all the furniture and your belongings are being taken out of the house. Not only will they be frightened by all the activity, they could get under someone's feet and cause an accident.
- Lock the door and hang a 'Do not open - pets in here' sign on the door, or think about leaving them at a friend's house until you are ready to leave.

**Following these short but simple guidelines will go a long to keeping your move stress free. Your removals company should offer a front to back service which, like that at Bishop's Move, ensures we are with you every step of the way.**

## Travel

- Many pets do not travel well. If your pets do not, try to get them used to travelling in the car well in advance by going on short journeys in the weeks leading up to the move using whatever basket or carrier you may be using on the day. To help avoid travel sickness, don't feed your pet for 12 hours before a journey. To be totally safe you could think about buying a British Standards approved dog harness for your dog so it can sit securely on one of the seats in your car.
- Cats should be transported in a secure basket. For longer journeys these should ideally be wicker and wire and measure at least 50 x 28 x 28cm. Don't be tempted to let them travel loose in the car as they can escape and be lost if an accident happens or the doors have to be opened in an emergency. You may like to let your cat out to use the litter tray and to eat some food on a long journey, but make sure all the doors are shut and locked until they are secured inside their carrier again.
- Cages transporting small animals and birds should be covered with a cloth to keep them quiet and restful, but make sure you don't cover the air holes completely.
- Pack cages and cat carriers carefully, securing them so that they cannot move around but leaving sufficient ventilation. Do not put them into the removal van or the boot of the car.
- Your dog will need frequent stops, so keep it on a lead. Although dogs enjoy riding with their ears blowing in the wind, dirt and bugs can cause them injury or infections to their eyes, ears and nose.
- If your pet needs food or water during the journey, make sure that the food is bland and easily digested and that the water comes from your regular supply at home.



- Make sure the car is well-ventilated and never leave any pets in a hot or cold car while you stop for a break. In a hot car, temperatures can rise quickly resulting in either heatstroke or even death. A cold car can be just as dangerous for animals left for any length of time. Extremes of weather can be particularly hazardous for fish as in hot weather the water they are travelling in heats up quickly and loses its oxygen, and on a cool day it can cool down to a low temperature at which they cannot live.
- Cats can take time to adjust as they are very dependant on territory and are sensitive to their surroundings. Ideally they should be kept inside for about four weeks. So, lock or seal cat flaps until they are used to the new house. For the first couple of days keep it in one small room and surround it with familiar objects, feeding and water bowls, toys, bed, litter tray, etc, while you unpack and get settled. Then introduce your cat to its new home a room at a time, gradually moving each of its familiar objects to their permanent place.
- When you introduce your cat to the new outdoor surroundings, withhold food for 12 hours and go outside with your cat, letting it explore a little before calling it back in for something to eat. Gradually lengthen the trips outside until your cat becomes familiar with the area and can go out alone. Continue to provide a litter tray indoors for some time until your cat has got to know the area and the other cats that live there and feels confident about going outside.



- Dogs adapt more quickly, but you should make sure it always has a collar and identity tag with the new address on in case it gets lost. It is probably a good idea to keep your dog on the lead for the first two weeks until he gets used to the new area unless he is particularly well trained.
- It is a good idea to introduce your dog to the neighbours and postman or other regular callers to your new home as soon as you can after moving.

### **Smaller Animals**

- Guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits and other small mammals are best transported in well-ventilated chew proof containers made of rigid plastic or metal. Make sure they have enough water, in a spill proof container, a little food and lots of bedding. Budgies travel best in a well ventilated box, but if they are travelling in their cage, remove anything that could become dislodged.
- Fish should be transported in clean, strong, polythene bags part filled with water from the tank. Leave a good air pocket above the water level. Put the bag into a polystyrene container, which you can buy from a pet or fish supply shop. Don't be tempted to move fish in their tank, they are too heavy when full, and the glass could break leaving your fish stranded.
- When you arrive at your new home treat your fish as though they were new and de-chlorinate the water in the tank. Before you put the fish back, make sure the bag water and the tank water are at room temperature.

### **Further Information**

For The Blue Cross 'Catfacts' leaflet 'Moving house with cats', please send a s.a.e. (donation towards printing costs appreciated) to:

**The Blue Cross,  
Shilton Road, Burford,  
Oxon OX18 4PF**

If your pet develops behaviour problems as a result of the move, please contact:

**Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors,  
PO Box 46,  
Worcester WR8 9YS**