

Dogs And Cars

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Are We There Yet?

What is it with dogs and cars? When the family trip rolls by each year, there's the dog, hopping in the back seat, head already hanging out the window, tongue waving expectantly. Dogs seem to naturally enjoy the thrill of traveling down the interstate at sixty miles an hour. An important question is, "What happens if you're in an accident?" What is the best way to properly restrain your animal while in a moving vehicle?

Safety First

Whether you are starting a ten-hour excursion or a simple trip to the vet, your dog needs to be restrained properly. This is to insure the safety of the animal and the safety of humans. For the same reasons the seatbelt was made for humans, dogs need some form of restraint as well. If an accident occurs, an unsecured dog will fly through the air, becoming an airborne missile. This will, most likely, injure or kill the dog. Any type of airborne missile flying through the air in the event of a crash has a chance of hitting human occupants in the vehicle, causing severe damage. Unfortunately, seatbelts aren't very helpful when strapping your dog in place. There are, however, some good methods available to secure your dog while riding in a car.

Harness

The first method is the harness system. This is simply a regular harness that is put on the dog, with a leash attached to it, hooking to the seatbelt. This does a good job in securing the dog, although the dog can still shift around, slide, etc. This also takes up seating room that could be used for people. So large families might have a hard time using this type of dog restraint.

Barrier

The second way of restraining your dog is through a protective barrier. Metal poles are attached to the back portion of the vehicle, letting the dog roam free, the bed area making no contact with the passengers seated in the front. This is really helpful if you have a large dog, because the barrier keeps the dog in the back where he belongs. This method is not well suited for smaller breed dogs, because it offers no safety to the dog. The type of barrier at the left is suited for trucks and SUVs.

Crate

Probably the best way to keep your dog safe and secure is by using a crate. I know the dog will probably rather stick its head out the window, but the crate is the safest method for keeping both you and your animal safe from harm. This type of crate pictured to the right opens from the side, perfect for minivans, or SUVs. This particular type also folds for easy storage.