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Transporting Animals in Commerce

Last Modified:



The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) requires humane treatment of regulated animals during transportation in commerce. This page offers resources to help animal carriers and owners understand the AWA regulations for commercial transportation and comply with the law.

Other Federal and State authorities also regulate the movement of animals. Learn more at APHIS Pet Travel and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Are You Regulated Under the AWA?

Commerce covered under the AWA includes the inter- and intrastate transport of animals **for sale for research, as pets, or for exhibition** (such as zoos).

Yes

Any airline, motor carrier, rail carrier, shipping line, or other business taking custody of AWA-regulated animals and transporting them “for hire” is **regulated.** For example:

- Airlines that transport covered animals under the plane or as cargo
- Boarding kennels or hired drivers that take responsibility for shipping animals or receiving them after or during shipment without the animal's owner physically present
- Quarantine facilities
- Freight forwarders or handlers

Businesses that conduct regulated activities must register with APHIS and comply with the transportation standards.

Apply for Registration

View Transportation Standards

No

Transportation of pets that remain in the custody of their owners is **not** regulated under the AWA. For example:

- Pets that travel in the cabin of an aircraft with their owner (or their owner's unpaid designee)
- Pets that ride along with their owner in a hired taxi

However, other Federal or State requirements may apply. Learn more at APHIS Pet Travel.

Resources

Pets on Planes

This training includes videos, text lessons, and quizzes to help pet owners and airport personnel understand the factors that can improve the safety of dogs and



Minimum Age Requirements for Transporting Dogs and Cats

(PDF, 773.88 KB)

Tech Note

Bird Welfare Acceptance Checklist

(PDF, 176.56 KB)

Factsheet

Contingency Plan Requirements and Planning Resources

Tech Notes, Factsheet, and Form

Attempted Inspections

(PDF, 545.1 KB)

Tech Note

2023 Animal Transportation Welfare Symposium

Presentation Recordings

Labels: "Live Animals" and "Wild Animals"

Printable Templates

Enclosure Requirements for Dogs and Cats in Air Cargo Transport

Poster

Animal Welfare Act and Regulations for Transportation

The Animal Welfare Regulations are available online in the electronic Code of Federal Regulations (eCFR). Registration for transporters is covered in Part 2, Subpart B § 2.25–2.27. The standards for transportation are described in Part 3; each Subpart (A–G) covers a specific animal species. For quick reference, use the table below to browse the transportation standards for each.

Animal Species	Transportation Standards
Dogs and Cats	Subpart A § 3.14–3.20
Guinea Pigs and Hamsters	Subpart B § 3.35–3.41
Rabbits	Subpart C § 3.60–3.66
Nonhuman Primates	Subpart D § 3.86–3.92
Marine Mammals	Subpart E § 3.112–3.118
Other Warmblooded Mammals	Subpart F § 3.136–3.142
Birds	Subpart G § 3.161–3.168

Printable Version

The full AWA and Regulations are also available as a downloadable PDF, commonly called the “Blue Book.”

Download Blue Book

Contingency Planning Resources

Contingency Plan Development Guide (1.12 MB)

Quick Reference: Contingency Plans for Emergencies (569 KB)

Keeping Animals Safe During Emergencies (483.13 KB)

Printable Labels

- Live Animals
- Wild Animals

Have a question about animal welfare laws and requirements?

Visit Our Animal Welfare Contacts Directory
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