

# Safe travel

and holidays with your dog in the UK



National Canine Defence League

A Dog is for Life

*In association with the AA*

Holiday time should be for the whole family, including your dog. Nowadays, there are many options open to those wanting to take their pet on holiday with them in the UK.

However, there are also considerations that have to be made to ensure that your dog is safe and happy. If you are planning to leave him in a hotel room all day so that he isn't able to join in with family activities, perhaps your dog would be happiest left behind. This leaflet covers all the points that you will need to think about, whether you decide to take your dog with you or find him alternative care.

## OUT & ABOUT IN THE UK

Whether you are going away on holiday in the UK or just taking your dog on a day out, make sure that you don't have a wasted journey. Always plan well in advance.

### Dog-friendly or unfriendly?

- Check out dog-friendly facilities before you travel. Don't just turn up – you may have to leave your dog in the car and it really isn't worth the risk. Leave your dog at home or in alternative care if you're not sure, or find somewhere else that will allow you to take your dog with you.
- Many nature reserves and National Trust open space properties accept dogs on leads, although they may not be allowed into buildings.
- Many theme parks and shopping centres ban dogs. Try not to leave your dog tied up alone outside a shop as he may be stolen or bite someone if he is approached.
- Pubs and restaurants may be hesitant to allow dogs. By law, dogs are allowed where food is being served but not where food is being prepared. It is up to the establishment's own discretion whether they allow dogs on their premises. Check out details of dog-friendly pubs before you travel.



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### In the country

The Countryside Code is there to protect the landscape, plant and animal life and the people who live and work there. If you stick to the code and use your common sense, you and your dog can have a great day out.

- Always keep your dog under close control. If your dog has a tendency to run off and not come back when called, then it may be a good idea to keep him on an extending lead to give a degree of freedom yet still be under supervision.
- Keep to public paths across farmland and keep your dog on a lead. Do not allow your dog to trample crops or flush game and be aware of livestock.
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone. If a farmer sees your dog worrying or running near livestock or suspects that he is about to attack his livestock, he may shoot him and you may be prosecuted and fined – even if the dog has not actually attacked an animal. Sheep easily become stressed by the sight of a free running dog and may abort lambs during the lambing season.
- Take your litter home. 'Scoop that poop' and dispose of it in a bin.
- Make no unnecessary noise. Do not let your dog worry animals by unnecessary barking.

- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has opened up millions of acres more land to walkers across the UK. However, on some of this land dogs will have to be kept on leads and on previously accessible land they may be banned at certain times of the year.
- Designated land where dogs are banned will have signs posted on notice boards nearby. If in doubt you should phone the local council to confirm which areas are still open to walk your dog.

## At the seaside

Unfortunately some coastal towns have banned dogs from their beaches in order to gain clean beach awards and some may only allow dogs at certain times of the year (October – April for example).



- Check with the local authority or tourism office before booking your holiday to make sure that there will be a dog-friendly beach nearby.
- Some dog-friendly coastal hotels will have access to their own stretch of beach – so try to find one of these if you are having trouble finding somewhere.
- Be careful of beaches with strong tides or undercurrents. If there is a swimming ban or warning signs for human swimmers then don't allow your dog to swim either.
- Keep your dog under control – especially in the presence of children and always remember to pick up your dog's poop.
- Be careful if you are throwing a ball for your dog to retrieve on sand as he may ingest a large amount of sand and become ill.

## HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

There is a lot of dog-friendly accommodation available in the UK to suit all tastes. Remember to check the conditions of stay with your holiday provider (there may be an extra charge per dog and you may be responsible for any damage that he causes). Guides such as *Pets Welcome!* list hundreds of guesthouses, cottages and hotels that will accept pets and often include details of local facilities such as dog walks. Contact the Tourist Office in the area that you will be visiting to make sure that there will be sufficient areas of interest where your dog will be allowed.

### Self-catering holiday cottages

- One of the most popular choices, offering freedom and flexibility to dog owners. Especially good if you have more than one dog.
- Please respect any rules that may apply to dogs, such as not letting them on the furniture or in bedrooms.

### B&Bs and Hotels

- Dogs may not be allowed in certain parts of the hotel, such as the dining room – so ensure that your dog can be left on his own while you are eating, without destroying the hotel room!
- Try to book a room that opens directly onto the hotel grounds, so that you can take your dog out without disturbing other occupants.
- Some deluxe hotels such as the Lygon Arms in the Cotswolds, cater especially for dog owners.



## Boating holidays – Narrowboats and cruisers

- Most boating companies will allow dogs on boats, however they may place a restriction on the number of dogs allowed.
- Keep your dog under control whilst on the boat – for his own safety. If he is likely to jump into the water after ducks, make sure that he is held securely on a lead.
- Consider obtaining a lifejacket for your dog if he is not a good swimmer.

## Camping and caravanning

- Look out for the paw sign, showing which sites are particularly good for dog walks.
- Make sure that the campsite allows dogs.
- Dogs must not be allowed to run free and must be under control on the campsite at all times.

## Activity holidays especially for dogs and their owners

- These holidays are organised with the dedicated dog owner in mind, enabling them to learn more about their pet in a fun and relaxing atmosphere and to meet other like-minded people.
- Organised activities include training, agility, orienteering, massage techniques and even line dancing with your dog.  
See 'Useful Contacts' for more information.



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# ENSURING YOUR HOLIDAY GOES WITHOUT A HITCH

## ■ ID tag changes

Remember to attach temporary identification tags to your dog's collar with details of your holiday address and telephone number or if possible your mobile phone number. Consider microchipping your pet as a form of permanent identification. If your dog should get lost, contact the local police and dog warden.

## ■ Find the name and address of a vet local to the area you are staying in before you travel.

This could save valuable time in case of an emergency.

## ■ Make sure your dog's vaccinations are up-to-date and he has been treated with a preventative preparation for fleas and ticks.

If he is on any medication make sure that you have enough supplies for the whole holiday.

## ■ Don't take or leave your dog anywhere where it is too hot or too cold.

Certain breeds or types of dogs can find heat particularly difficult – e.g. flat-faced dogs (bulldogs, pugs), greyhound types or overweight dogs. Always make sure that your dog has access to shade and clean water when travelling. Take a bottle of water and a spare bowl with you at all times. Never leave your dog in a car, even on a mild day, as he could die in minutes and you could be prosecuted.

## ■ Consider introducing your dog to an indoor kennel before going on holiday.

Indoor kennels can be useful for safe travel and secondly, as a familiar safe den to sleep in



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if he has to be left alone in accommodation for a short period of time. See our factsheet on *Indoor kennel* for more information.

■ **Make sure that your dog is well behaved.**

If your dog has any behaviour problems that may affect your holiday enjoyment, then either see a behaviourist or trainer to deal with the problem, or give the NCDL a call for advice. Alternatively reconsider and leave him behind.

■ **Don't forget his 'things'.**

Remember to bring his bedding, bowls, towels, toys, regular food and a spare lead and collar. Take plenty of his food with you, as you may not be able to find supplies where you are staying and an abrupt change of diet may upset your dog's stomach.

■ **Be a responsible dog owner at all times.**

All dog owners have the duty of being ambassadors for dogs. Don't give anyone the excuse to exclude dogs just because an owner has acted irresponsibly. Keep your dog under control – especially around children, follow any restrictions or local laws when walking your dog and always 'scoop that poop'.

## HOW TO GET THERE SAFELY

Travelling by car, train or coach can be a stressful activity for you and your dog, especially if he is not used to it. If possible start with short trips and build up to longer ones.

### Car travel

- Make sure that your dog is safely restrained by using a car harness, a travel crate or a dog-guard.
- Provide fresh drinking water at all times (non-spillable bowls are available) and make plenty of

stops on your journey for him to stretch his legs and relieve himself. Never exercise your dog on the hard shoulder of the motorway.

- Never leave a dog alone in a car, especially on a warm or hot day. Ensure that the sun is not directly on him whilst you are travelling and try to travel during the coolest part of the day. But if you use a sunshade, make sure that it does not obscure your vision. Make sure someone stays with your dog whilst at a service station.
- Don't feed your dog just before travelling to reduce the likelihood of sickness.
- Remember that the inside of a car legally constitutes a public place. Anyone who is bitten when sticking his or her fingers through your car window could report you under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.
- Don't let your dog stick his head out of the window as passing vehicles could injure him, his eyes or ears could be damaged by particles in the air or he could try to jump out.
- Only sedate your dog if completely necessary and as a last resort. Only use sedatives that have been prescribed specifically for your dog by your vet.
- Find out if your recovery service will allow your dog to travel in the cab with you if necessary. It may not be safe for your dog to travel in your towed car.
- See our *Dog Car Safety* leaflet for more information.



## Train or rail travel

- Most rail carriers will allow a person to travel with two dogs free-of-charge. Additional dogs will then be charged for. Always check conditions of travel with your rail operator before setting off.
- Dogs must be kept on leads or in baskets/cages and must not be allowed on seats.
- If your dog is not well behaved and other passengers make a complaint you may be forced to move to a different carriage or to put him into the freight van.
- Make sure that your dog has had the chance to relieve himself before boarding the train.
- Remember to take food and water for your dog for the journey.
- Dogs are allowed free-of-charge on the London Underground, but must be carried on the escalators.

## Coach travel

- Assistance dogs are allowed on coaches. Non-assistance dogs are carried at the discretion of the operating company, so it is very important to check with them before booking your ticket.
- Dogs must be well behaved and sit as far as possible under the seat of the owner with a lead on.

## Ferry travel

- Ferry companies travelling to and from destinations within the UK usually allow dogs to accompany their owners, except where food is served or prepared. Other companies may insist that dogs travel within kennels on the car deck, or be kept in the car. So always check before travelling.
- If taken on deck, dogs should be on a lead and under control at all times.

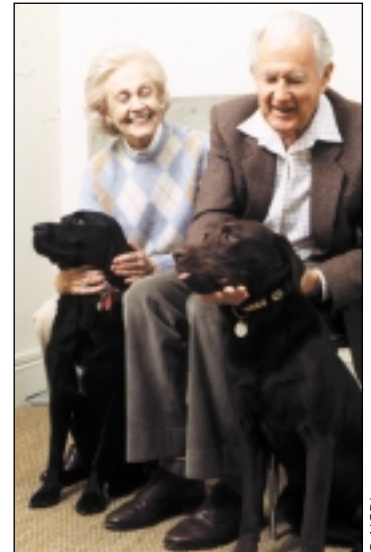
## LEAVING HIM BEHIND

If you decide not to take your dog with you, then there are several options for alternative care.

### Friends and family

Your dog will be happiest if he is left with someone that he knows and likes.

- Remember to leave the details of your vet and the telephone number of where you will be staying.
- Make sure that whoever you are leaving your dog with is aware of the responsibilities and legal obligations of having a dog in their care. They must keep the dog under control at all times whilst in public and be sure to scoop that poop!
- If they are caring for the dog in their own home, then you will need to attach a temporary tag with their address and phone number just in case your dog escapes.



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## Boarding kennels

- Ask friends, family, local vets or dog trainers to recommend a reliable kennel, as facilities can vary enormously.
- Find out the opening hours, turn up unannounced and ask to be shown around. Confident kennel owners will be happy to give you a guided tour. Insist on seeing the entire establishment and don't accept excuses.
- Ensure that the kennels are clean and dry, unless they have just been washed down. Make sure you are satisfied with the condition of the kennels and runs, and that dogs look clean and happy.
- Make sure that the kennel has an up-to-date licence issued by the council and adequate insurance cover in case your pet needs emergency care.
- If the kennel doesn't ask for proof of vaccination, your dog may be at risk from disease brought in by other boarders. Consider vaccinating your dog against kennel cough (some kennels may insist on this).
- Remember to book early, as the best kennels get booked up well in advance.
- Prepare your dog for being left in the kennel during your holiday by leaving him in just for a weekend or overnight, so that he can get used to the surroundings and know that you will be coming back for him.
- Remember to take his toys and his usual bedding to comfort him while you are away.
- Consider sending your dog to one of the deluxe kennels that offer holidays especially for dogs on their own, combining fitness and training along with the comforts of home. Amongst other activities your dog will have the freedom to roam around fields, have personal tuition on assault courses, go swimming or take a trip to the beach.
- Ask us for our factsheet on *Choosing a boarding/quarantine kennels* or contact the Animal Boarding Advisory Bureau (see contacts) for further information.

## Petsitters/Housesitters

There are an increasing number of companies and organisations that offer petsitting services (see Contacts for further information). A petsitter will either look after your dog in their home or in your own home. Your pet will get individual care with all the comforts of home.

- Meet your petsitter before booking and make sure that you are confident in their abilities. Make sure you get references and be sure to follow them up. Check that they have adequate insurance cover.
- A good petsitter will ask many questions about your dog and will want to know his usual routine.
- Make sure that your dog's vaccinations, worm and flea treatments are up-to-date, as you may need to provide proof of this.
- Book early as a good petsitter will be in demand, especially during the school holidays.

If you want to take your dog with you on holiday, it is your responsibility to ensure that he enjoys himself as much as you do. Although it may be harder work than leaving him at home, you can look forward to many years of happy holidays with your hound.



# CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

## General

**The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC)**  
P.O. Box 46, Worcester WR8 9YS  
01386 751151  
[www.apbc.org.uk](http://www.apbc.org.uk)

**The National Trust**  
P.O. Box 39, Bromley, Kent BR1 3XL  
020 8315 1111  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

## Travel

**The Automobile Association (AA)**  
Norfolk House, Priestley Road, Basingstoke,  
Hampshire RG24 9NY  
0870 600 0371  
[www.theAA.com](http://www.theAA.com)

## Dog-friendly holiday accommodation resources

*Pets Welcome!*

Published by FHG Publications – ISBN 1 85055 318 1  
Available from all good bookshops for @ £5.99

Websites:

[www.petfriendly.co.uk](http://www.petfriendly.co.uk)  
[www.petholidays.com](http://www.petholidays.com)

## Accommodation

**The Caravan Club**  
East Grinstead House, East Grinstead,  
West Sussex RH19 1UA  
01342 326944  
[www.caravanclub.co.uk](http://www.caravanclub.co.uk)

**The Lygon Arms**  
Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7DU  
01386 852255  
[www.savoy-group.co.uk/lygon/lygon.html](http://www.savoy-group.co.uk/lygon/lygon.html)

## Activity holidays for you with your dog

**Dog-Days Activity Holidays**  
13 East Green, Anstruther, Fife KY10 3AA  
01333 312260  
[www.dogdays.ndirect.co.uk/DogDays](http://www.dogdays.ndirect.co.uk/DogDays)

## Dogs for Life Holidays

Leadon View Cottage, Buttersend Lane, Hartpury  
Gloucestershire GL19 3DD  
01452 700023 (office hours only)  
[www.dogsworldwide.com/dogsforlife.htm](http://www.dogsworldwide.com/dogsforlife.htm)

## Activity holidays just for your dog

**The Dog House**  
Dinan Farm, Talog, Carmarthen SA33 6PD  
07000 364364

## Boarding and Petsitters

**Animal Boarding Advisory Bureau**  
01606 891303

## The National Association of Registered Petsitters

The Pulpits, Little Hereford, Ludlow SY8 4AU  
01584 711534  
[www.dogsit.com](http://www.dogsit.com)



For more information or advice on this or any other dog related subject, or if you would like to support our vital work with a donation, please telephone or write to:

NCDL, 17 Wakley Street, London, EC1V 7RQ

Email: [info@ncdl.org.uk](mailto:info@ncdl.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7837 0006

or visit NCDL online at [www.ncdl.org.uk](http://www.ncdl.org.uk)

For details of your nearest NCDL Rehoming Centre please call 08457 646 000

The NCDL is working towards the day when all dogs can enjoy a happy life, free from the threat of unnecessary destruction.



The AA, with more than 11 million members, is the UK's biggest motoring organisation and a leading voice in road safety. Our aim is to make road travel as stress-free, accessible and safe as possible. For UK and European drivers, the AA's Internet service [www.theAA.com](http://www.theAA.com) provides traffic information, route guidance, motoring advice, international driving permits and motoring travel insurance. AA Five Star Europe personal travel insurance includes free cover for emergency veterinary and boarding fees while driving with dogs and cats on the Continent.



National Canine Defence League

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