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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

Veterinary
Services

Handling Live Animal Shipments

Checklist for Airline Baggage and Cargo Handlers*

Warehousing

- Caution** Use regular handholds and don't reach inside cages, so that animals don't bite or scratch you.
- Separation** Keep animals in a separate area, away from other cargo and safe from forklifts and other equipment.
- Ventilation** Provide fresh air through windows, doors, vents, air conditioning, fans, or blowers. Protect animals from drafts and blasts from air conditioning and heating vents.
- Cooling** Provide cooling from fans, air conditioning, or other sources when the temperature in cargo area is above 24°C (75°F). Don't expose animals to temperatures above 29°C (85°F); check temperature next to cages halfway up the side.
- Heating** Turn on heat when temperature in cargo area falls below 8°C (45°F). Check temperature next to cages halfway up the side. EXCEPTION: Indoor temperature can be lower if a certificate from an accredited veterinarian states that animals (except guinea pigs) have been acclimated to temperatures below 45°F.
- Feeding and watering** Follow the shipper's instructions. Individual animals differ, so read the instructions on *each* cage. Check an animal's need for feed and water at least once every 12 hours. Don't open the cage—bowls should be easily accessible with the door shut.
- Sanitation** Keep animal holding area clean and sanitary. Control insects, lice, rats and mice.

See reverse side

*See separate list for baggage and passenger agents. For details, see Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9, Chapter 1.

Loading

- Transfer** Be gentle; don't toss or tilt cages. Move animals on a separate cart if possible.
- Ventilation** Remember, animals need fresh air to breathe and get rid of body heat. Don't pull canvas flaps on the cart down over cages and don't cover cages with tarpaulins or plastic sheets.
- Loading** Load animals last, but minimize their waiting time outdoors. Protect them from rain, snow and hot sun.
- Stowing** Put cages in approved cargo holds at the outside edge of the load. Some holds are not approved because they don't provide enough heat or ventilation.
- Stacking** Stack cages level with proper end up. Use ties and straps to prevent other cargo from falling on cages. Keep cages away from radioactive materials or fumes—dry ice or embalming fluid, for example.

En Route and on Arrival

- Safety checks** If animals are aboard, check whenever possible to see if they are safe and healthy, have enough air and are not overheated or too cold. In case of emergency or lengthy delays, unload animal cages promptly.
- Unloading** Open cargo holds with animals first. Move cages indoors promptly. Use same precautions as when loading.
- Consignee notification** Phone the consignee as soon as animals arrive. For COD shipments, record the time, date, and method of notification—with calls at least once every 6 hours.
- Emergencies** Be ready in case an animal gets sick, is injured, or accidentally escapes. Don't chase an escaped animal or corner it. Shut windows, doors and gates to contain the animal. Then call for help from the shipper, the consignee, or one of the following:

Local zoo: _____

Local animal shelter: _____

Private veterinarian: _____

Local APHIS office: _____

Make a Note of the Phone Numbers Now