



Buckle-Up Your Best Buddy

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Fastening our seat belts comes second nature to most of us, but we tend to overlook the importance of securing our pets, especially our dogs, before we head out on a road trip. Not only can unrestrained pets interfere with our driving (the American Automobile Association finds that loose pets ranked third on the list of top driver distractions), but their safety can also be at risk.

Like a person, in an auto accident a pet exerts a force of 20 times his body weight if not properly restrained, which can result in severe injury and possibly death to the pet and/or car passengers. Pet parents have several options when choosing appropriate vehicle pet restraint and the right selection depends on the breed and size of your pet, as well as the type of vehicle in which you are traveling.

Choosing the Right Restraint:

Small Dogs: Small dogs can travel in pet carriers or canine seat belt harness secured to the car's seat belt. Car seats, similar to those used for children, are also available for small dogs and in addition to keeping them restrained, they allow the dog to have a better view out the window.

Large Dogs: If you have an SUV or station wagon, a pet crate secured in the back of the vehicle is often the best way for large dogs to travel in comfort and safety. If your car cannot accommodate a large crate, a canine seat belt harness is the next safest way for your dog to travel.

Cats: For our feline friends, pet carriers that attach to the seat belt and headrest of the vehicle are an ideal option. Be sure to choose a carrier with soft sides to protect your cat in the case of sudden stops and mesh windows for ventilation.

What not to Do: Don't ride with your pet in the front seat. Like children, front air bags can injure pets if they deploy when your pet is in the front seat. Also, avoid having your dog ride in the back of a pick-up truck. Even if restrained by a leash, a dog can strangle himself by falling over the side of the truck bed.

If you have a pet behavior question or would like some training assistance,
San Diego Humane Society is here to help!
Visit our website at www.sdhumane.org to view our behavior and training options,
or call our **Behavior Helpline at 619-299-7012 ext. 2244** to speak with a trainer.