



K9 Car Safety

As a holistic method, Head-to-Tail training always first addresses the overall well-being of your dog. Safety is always our number one concern. So it obviously drives me c-r-a-z-y when I see owners being careless with their dogs.

I think it's wonderful that people want to take their pets out. And car rides can even be very therapeutic if your dog enjoys them. But don't risk a dog's health, or even life, for the sake of a joy ride.

Car safety for our dogs is something owners frequently overlook or think little about. However, this is becoming more of an issue with new vehicle equipment, and even state laws.

First and foremost, dogs should NEVER be left unrestrained in an open truck bed. An appropriate-sized, hard-sided carrier should be stabilized to the truck. Such as an airline-style carrier tethered securely to prevent sliding around the bed. Be sure to check your local state laws regarding this method. Many states have clear restrictions about transporting pets in open beds.

NEVER NEVER allow your dog to sit in your lap while driving. Hopefully, the reasons for this are obvious. But I still see many small-dog owners driving with a dog in their lap! Yes, it's cute. But it's distracting for you and the other drivers around you.

A dog *inside* a vehicle should also be restrained in some fashion. A secured, appropriate carrier is again ideal. But there are many other wonderful options available now. For those with mini-vans, SUV and other cars with large cargo areas, adjustable pet barriers help confine dogs away from the passenger seats.

Never let your dog sit in the front passenger seat. Since all cars now come standard with front passenger air bags, this could be deadly for a dog in an accident. Just like young children, deployed air bags can fatally wound pets in an accident.

If your dog needs to ride in the rear passenger seat, the safest spot is the middle. Purchase an appropriate seat-belt restraint to keep him confined.

Please also consider your dog's health during a car ride. The American Veterinary Medical Association states, "Pets should not be allowed to ride with their heads outside car windows. Particles of dirt can enter the eyes, ears, and nose, causing injury or infection". A dog hanging out a car window is also very distracting to other drivers. Your dog will enjoy the wind blowing through a slightly opened window just as well.

Need more convincing? Here are some more great articles about transporting your best friend by car:

[Canine Auto Restraint Equipment \(C.A.R.E.\)](http://www.canineauto.com/) - www.canineauto.com/

[Humane Society of the United States](http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/caring_for_pets_when_you_travel/traveling_by_car.html) - www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/caring_for_pets_when_you_travel/traveling_by_car.html

[Consumer Reports - Car Safety for Dogs](http://autos.msn.com/advice/CRArt.aspx?contentid=4024052) - autos.msn.com/advice/CRArt.aspx?contentid=4024052