

VIP Ground Transport

Insider Preparation Guide

Though VIP Ground Transport is professionally handled, thoughtful preparation on your end can make a real difference— reducing stress for both you and your pet, minimizing delays, and preventing last-minute scrambling.

This guide breaks down simple, effective steps to help your pet feel ready for a long-distance VIP ground trip—from packing to pick up day.

***For educational purposes only.** Exact timing, rest stops, and procedures may vary based on route, weather, and your transport company’s policies.*

Quick Pack List

Identification & Documentation:

- Secure collar/harness with ID tag
- Microchip number + registry (if known)
- Health Certificate (CVI), if required
- Vaccination records, if requested
- Written care instructions (feeding + meds + potty cues)

Personal Items:

- Well-fitting harness + Leash
- Pre-portioned meals + 1 extra day (labeled)
- Any prescribed meds (original bottle + written schedule)
- Familiar comfort item (small blanket or toy with home scent)

Your Pet Profile

- Full name, age, species, breed, weight
- Temperament notes (timid/reactive)
- Handling notes (touch-sensitive, door-darter, shy with strangers)
- Leash behavior (pulls, freezes, reactive, calm)
- Potty cues or habits
- Any medical considerations or mobility limits
- Your contact info + receiver contact info + backup number

7-10 days before travel

Leash & Harness Familiarity

Fit-check the harness now and practice brief leash clips indoors so travel-day transitions are secure and stress-free.

- Practice a calm gear-on routine (no chasing)
- Do a quick “slip check” once fitted: if your pet can back out, tighten or adjust
- Wait 1–2 minutes
- Remove it
- Repeat once or twice daily
- Add 30-60 seconds of indoor leash walking

Insider tip: Clip the leash, reward stillness for 3 seconds, then unclip—micro reps build calm cooperation fast.

Crate/Carrier Familiarity (Progression)

Spread over several days — do not rush

- **Phase A** (2–3 days): Door always open
 - ✓ Toss treats in,
 - ✓ Feed a few bites inside,
 - ✓ Let your pet leave freely.
- **Phase B** (2–3 days): Door closed briefly
 - ✓ Close for 10–30 seconds while you sit nearby
 - ✓ Open calmly before fussing starts.
- **Phase C** (2–3 days): Door closed + you move around
 - ✓ Close door for 2–5 mins while you do normal things.
- **Phase D** (last 2–3 days): Out-of-sight reps
 - ✓ Step out of sight for 10–30 seconds
 - ✓ Return calmly
 - ✓ open only when quiet.

Insider tip: Don’t “pep talk.” Calm silence teaches the crate is uneventful — which is the whole point.

Paperwork + Documentation

Find out early what health documentation is required (such as a veterinarian-signed Health Certificate/ CVI). This prevents last-minute scrambling and avoids travel delays.

- Confirm whether a Health Certificate (CVI) is required and the valid date window
- Confirm that your contact information and the receiver’s contact information are correct and easy to find on your Pet Profile
- Keep all documents together in one labeled folder/envelope (and save a photo backup on your phone)

Insider tip: Before you hand anything over, double-check your pet’s name and destination details match across all documents.

Noise & Motion Acclimation

This helps reduce startle responses:

- Play light road noise during meals/rest
- Start low volume
- Increase slowly over several days
- Practice calm car time (parked first)
- Engine off → short quiet drives
- Keep sessions short and calm – end before stress builds

Insider tip: Pair road sounds with something pleasant (meals/rest), not playtime—your pet learns the noise means “relax,” not “rev up.”

48-72 hours before travel

Grooming & Comfort

Keep your pet clean and comfortable so they can rest well during travel and avoid preventable irritations.

- Give a light bath 1-3 days before pickup (not immediately before) so your pet is clean, dry, and comfortable.
- Brush out tangles/mats (mats can cause constant discomfort on long rides).
- Trim nails to reduce slipping and accidental scratches during transitions.

Insider tip: *If your pet is prone to matting, focus on the friction zones (armpits, collar area, hips)—those spots can get sore during longer rides.*

Prep food + meds like a professional

Pack meals and medications in a way that's clear, consistent, and easy to follow

- Stick to your pet's normal feeding routine (avoid big meals right before pick up)
- Fresh water should always be available
- Pre-portion meals in labeled bags and include simple written instructions (Meal 1, Meal 2...)
- Keep meds in original bottles + include written schedule
- Write down any special instructions from your veterinarian
- Avoid new supplements or calming products (GI upset risk)
- No new treats, chews, toppers, bones, or rich foods.

Insider tip: *Pack a "just in case" mini kit consisting of 1 extra labeled meal, 2 extra doses of meds, and written instructions.*

Health Check

Do a quick health check in the days leading up to travel. Catching changes early protects your pet, prevents delays, and helps your provider plan appropriately.

- Notify your provider right away if you notice **vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, coughing/ sneezing, or eye/nose discharge**
- Share any vet instructions in advance (dose, timing, with/without food)
- Do not start new meds or calming supplements in the final 72 hours without vet guidance
- If meds are approved, send the name + dose + schedule before pickup day

Insider tip: *The day before travel, note your pet's "baseline" (appetite, stool, energy). If anything shifts, you'll spot it faster—and small changes can matter more than people realize.*

Light Activity, Not Overstimulation

Stick with normal, light exercise to help your pet stay relaxed and maintain a steady routine.

- Normal walks are great
- Avoid intense exercise or stressful outings
- Calm energy going into travel helps pets settle faster.

Insider tip: *Aim for a calm walk and sniff time rather than intense play—sniffing lowers arousal and helps pets settle better than "tiring them out."*

Day of pickup

Set your pet up for a calm handoff

A quiet, predictable handoff helps your pet transition smoothly and reduces stress during loading.

- Potty break right before handoff
- Keep the environment quiet (no crowd, no hype).
- Avoid a heavy meal right before travel (lighter earlier is often better)
- Avoid sedation unless vet-directed and pre-planned.

Insider tip: Pack everything into one grab bag so nothing gets missed at handoff.

Do a quick ID & Safety Check

Do a final 60-second check so identification is secure and nothing important gets missed in the moment.

- Harness/collar fitted correctly + ID attached
- Leash clipped before the door opens
- Microchip info current (if applicable)
- Share a recent photo (helpful if anything gets chaotic)

Insider tip: Clip the leash before you open any door or gate. Most escapes happen in the 2-second gap between “door opens” and “leash on.”