

Best Practices Rabbit Transport Program

PROTECTING THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF RABBITS DURING THE TRANSPORT PROCESS

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Volunteers frequently transport animals to other cities and/or states for rescue, foster care and adoption. While this practice saves the lives of countless animals, it also requires special attention to the safety and well-being of the animals. We recommend following these best practices when transporting rabbits.

This checklist outlines transport guidelines and best practices. Use this list to help organize your transport.

Transport Checklist For Drivers:

- Acknowledge that you have the appropriate rabbit care experience to transport rabbits. More experience caring for rabbits is required for longer transports.
- Make sure you receive a folder with all paperwork to travel with the rabbits, including: Proof of RHDV2 vaccination, official Health Certificates, your travel itinerary, rabbit photo manifest, a list of emergency veterinarians along the travel route, contact information for other transport participants. You may also have additional paperwork such as: veterinary records, shelter records, special instructions. Keep all paperwork together in one place.
- Visually inspect each rabbit before loading to ensure that the conditions of transport are being met. Destination shelters may turn away animals who are not as described! Sick animals are not eligible for transport. You may deny transport to any animal who violates the transport agreements.
- Each rabbit should have a cage card with photo and identifying information. Verify this as you are loading your vehicle.
- Make sure the rabbits you load into your vehicle match the rabbits on your photo manifest. Use the photo manifest and cage cards to pick up/drop off the correct rabbits at each destination.
- Carriers should be tied down inside the vehicle or fitted together tightly enough that friction prevents movement. Vehicles should not be loaded so heavily that carriers are not level or driver visibility is impaired. Loading should be done so there is good air flow to each carrier and each rabbit can be visually inspected.
- We recommend each driver have the following supplies: emergency first aid kit, RESCUE veterinary disinfectant cleaner spray & wet wipes, tie-downs for animal carriers, hay, fresh leafy greens, pellets, gallons of water plus a water dish for each rabbit, trash bags, papertowels, enough towels or other absorbent materials to replace wet bedding on each day of transport, whisk broom and pan, hand sanitizer.

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- If motel stays are anticipated you should have these additional supplies: exercise pens, tarps, litter boxes, extra litter, plastic toys, and treats.
- Transport must stop at least once every four hours in a safe area to perform a visual check on all rabbits. During each rest stop food and water should be offered to the rabbits. Clean carriers as necessary. Rabbits should never sit in wet, dirty carriers.
- Never leave animals unattended in a parked vehicle.
- Maximum transport time to a kennel or exercise pen (intermediate stop-over or final destination shelter) should be absolutely no more than 9-hours and ideally less than 9-hours.
- Longer transports require two drivers in the vehicle.
- No animal may be transported in an open truck bed or car trunk.
- Regularly communicate with your transport organizer. This is especially important if you are delayed or run into unexpected problems.
- Visually inspect each rabbit upon delivery to the next driver or at the destination shelter. Any health changes from the beginning of transport to the end of transport should be noted in writing and reported back to your transport organizer.
- You have the right to not deliver an animal into what you believe is a harmful situation. If you feel this to be the case, contact your transport organizer immediately.
- After transport is completed, all travel supplies should be disinfected, including: carriers, litter boxes, food and water bowls, towels or fleece bedding, exercise pens, tarps, etc. This is done to protect rabbits by reducing the risk of spreading disease.

We believe each rabbit should be treated with dignity and respect throughout the transport process. Our goal for each transport is to reduce rabbit stress and to keep rabbits healthy on the road and through arrival. Thank you for partnering with us to save rabbit lives!

