

## Chapter 4 – Doing Transports

### Volunteering to Transport

SOAR covers the 3 states of Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. We work together when it comes to finding our rescue Airedales good homes. Sometimes the best home is found in a state other than where the Airedale is being fostered. Sometimes the Airedale needs surgery, training or special foster care to get ready for their new home. These reasons and others often result in the need to move our Airedales to other states within our area. That is a lot of territory to cover when it comes to transporting an Airedale!

Transporting is a great way to give a small amount of your time without the long-term commitment needed to foster. It is also a great way to combine assisting SOAR with activities you might not otherwise have done. Take a friend with you and catch up on the latest news while helping SOAR do a transport. Do some shopping in a long-distance town after dropping off your Airedale. Regardless of whatever else you might do along the way, you can be sure SOAR and the Airedale appreciate your support!

Before you begin doing transports for SOAR, you MUST sign a SOAR Volunteer Agreement form and mail it to the SOAR Vice President Volunteers.



### Transport Necessities

Of course you need to have a vehicle in order to help with a transport. Usually it is best to transport an Airedale while it is in a crate, therefore the best vehicles are station wagons, SUVs or vans. However, many of our transports are also done in cars and without crates. Without a crate, you need to take a few extra precautions to keep the Airedale safe such as double leashing the dog to a seatbelt in the back seat of the car.

### What the Airedale Should Come With

Usually the Airedale will not be transported with a crate. Most of our volunteers who choose to transport with a crate already have one and use their own. For those who do not have crates, we encourage you to put a blanket on the seat and tie the leash to a fastened seatbelt. If for some reason, the Airedale will be coming with a crate that needs to be passed on, we will let you know ahead of time to ensure you can accommodate the crate.

The Airedale should come with a leash and collar set and an SOAR tag. If you are transporting an Airedale directly from a shelter or surrender situation, you may be required to bring a leash, collar and tag with you. Contact your state coordinator to get a supply of these. If you need to buy a leash and collar set, SOAR uses the Martingale-type collars. Save the receipt and we will reimburse you for it. Another thing to remember about the collar – if you are the person to put the collar on the dog, make sure that it is adjusted properly so the Airedale cannot back out of it and get loose. Many times the Airedale will also come with a care package. This may include some food, treats, toys, a blanket, bowls, etc. You can put the dog's blanket in the crate or on the seat, give them a toy or two and some treats to help ease the stress of the transport.

### Paperwork

If you are picking up an Airedale from a shelter or surrender situation, you will be responsible for getting the required paperwork. Shelters should have some release paperwork for you when you pick up the Airedale. If you are meeting someone to handle a surrender, print out a copy of SOAR's Rescue Release form in advance along with the Intake Profile. Have the person surrendering the dog fill them out as completely as possible and sign the Rescue Release form. Be sure to ask for any vet papers and get the name, address and phone of the vet who had been taking care of the Airedale.

If you are picking up an Airedale from a foster situation and transporting him to his new home, make sure you have all of the vet records and an SOAR Foster Home Report. If the Placement Contract and donation have not been taken care of in advance, you should also have that paperwork to pass on as well. If there is paperwork missing, let the transportation coordinator know.

As you hand off the dog to the next person on a transport, make sure the person has all of the paperwork. If the last person is a new adopter and you need to handle the Placement Contract and donation, wait while the new family finishes filling out and signing the Placement Contract and gives you a check. In this case, there should be an addressed, stamped envelope with two copies of the Placement Contract. Leave one with the new adopter and put the other in the envelope along with the check and drop it in the mail yourself.

Do NOT leave unsigned documents with the new adopter for them to handle and return. As much as possible, the coordinators will try to handle the Placement Contract and donation ahead of time so that you don't have to.



## **Making the Airedale Comfortable**

For the most part, the dog will ride just fine. You must remember, however, that this is a stressful time for the Airedale. He is meeting many new people along the way and he may not be used to riding for long distances. If we know the Airedale is nervous, we may have a vet prescribe something to relax him for the trip. A crate is a good choice for those Airedales who may be a little anxious. In our experience, most Airedales will do just fine in a crate or on a blanket on the seat.

At each stop, let the Airedale out for a potty break. Try to give them only small amounts of water or food along the way to help keep them from getting sick.

Please plan on leaving your pets at home. Again, remember this is a stressful time for an Airedale. The confines of a vehicle are no place to find out that your dog and the Airedale do not get along.



## **About the Airedale**

Many people who help us transport want to know a little about the Airedale they are transporting. Large Airedales may be tough to pick up if necessary to get them into a vehicle. Older dogs may not be physically able to get into a vehicle. Nervous dogs may need a crate and medication. As much as possible, we will pass this information on to you.

Other people want to know about the Airedale's history "just because." The transporter is a very important part of this Airedale's new life and we will be happy to tell you whatever we know.

## **Coordinating the Transport**

There are some transports where you are the only person doing the driving. In these cases, you may be given the phone numbers of the people on either end to coordinate times and locations.

Longer-distance transports, however, are coordinated in advance by the state coordinator or our transportation coordinator. He or she will arrange times, obtain phone numbers, determine meeting locations and publish everything in advance to everyone concerned – usually in an e-mail.

The transportation coordinator usually handles transports that are from one state to another state. They will send out a preliminary route via e-mail to volunteers who live along the route asking if anyone can fill the legs. The legs are usually around an hour in length, but the volunteers can fill as many legs as they are willing to drive.

Once all the legs are filled the transportation coordinator will send out a final transport e-mail to all the volunteers. It should include vehicle makes, models, colors and license plates along with names and cell phone numbers. It will have complete information on the dog being transported as well as reminders on what people need to remember.

## **Moderator**

If a transport involves more than one person doing the driving, there should be a person designated as the moderator who will be available by phone if there are any problems.

## **Out-of-Region Transports**

SOAR cannot arrange out-of-region transports (to states that are not part of SOAR) unless the groups from the out-of-region states agree to help with their part of the transport or the new adopter is willing to drive into the SOAR area to meet with our volunteers and the dog. Our transportation coordinator does not have the resources to recruit transporters in other areas.

## **Safety First**

Just a few reminders regarding transports. Our number one priority during a transport is to keep both dogs AND people safe. We also want to make this experience as pleasant as possible for the dog. It is a very stressful time for them and they can react very negatively – even if they are otherwise a good dog. These reminders are as follows:

- ALL coordinators requesting a transport should disclose to the transport coordinator what they know about the dog's temperament. For example, some dogs do not like men. Therefore, if a man was to do one of the legs, it could be planned to have a woman put the dog in a crate in the man's car and a woman could get them out of the crate at the end of that leg. If a dog is even somewhat aggressive, it might be best for the dog to wear a basket muzzle for the transport. If the dog is fearful or gets upset easily, then the transport should be planned only with people who can use crates. A coordinator can talk with their vet about medications for a dog during transport that can help ease anxiety. If a dog is on medications, that information should be passed on also.
- Attention needs to be paid as to how the leash is attached to the collar. Just recently, we had a dog bolt from a transporter in an attempt to get at another dog. The leash did not stop the dog from bolting because it was snapped to the ring holding the tags rather than the D ring on the collar. It would not hurt if each person on the transport checked the leash and collar for proper fit and attachment – and to make sure the dog did not chew through part or all of it during the last leg.
- Besides paperwork that should accompany the dog (especially vet records!), each dog should come with a blanket or towel from "home," some of the dog food they are used to eating and some water. Paperwork goes without saying, but I would like to address the other issues. Having something with the dog that smells like the "home" he or she came from can be comforting to them during this stressful time. If it is not convenient to send a blanket or a towel, at least send a toy or two that the dog loves to play with. Unless the transport is relatively short (only a few hours), the transporter should have some of the food the dog is used to eating to offer him or her. Transporters should not be feeding a dog hamburgers and people food – this could very likely result in a mess in the vehicle and possibly upset the dog's tummy.
- Transporters should be encouraged NOT to bring their own dogs on a transport. Two dogs who do not know each other traveling in the small, enclosed space of a vehicle is a recipe for trouble. If there is no other way around a transporter bringing their own dog, then they should bring a crate for the dog being transported. Also, if a transport is planned for two dogs at once, a crate should be used for one of them or use separate crates for each.
- Be well rested for any transport you do. We would rather you arrive safely than not at all.

- We can't always transport our dogs in crates. When we can't, PLEASE make sure the dog is tethered in your car. Here are four different ways to tether a dog in your car or SUV.

The first method is with the seatbelt.



The second method is with the headrest.



The third method is with the carabiner



The fourth method is with a permanent loop



- The Martingale Collar is designed to tighten if the dog pulls while on a leash – similar to a choke chain. However, it is only effective if it is properly adjusted, otherwise the dog can still back out of his collar.

The collar must be loose enough initially to fit over the dog's head. Once on, then it must be tightened using the slide buckle shown on the left of this photo so that when the bottom ring is pulled, the collar is snug on the dog's neck. There should not be any room to insert fingers when the bottom ring is pulled to tighten the collar.



## **Frequency of Transports**

How often you wish to transport is up to you. Our transportation coordinator may call on you several times in a short period if there are transports coming through your area. We expect that you will help only when you can and let us know when you cannot.

## **If No One is There to Meet You**

When a transport is arranged, our transportation coordinator will make sure that everyone has each other's cell phone numbers, if available. Hopefully, you should be able to reach the next person on their cell phone. You can also reach the transportation coordinator or a designated person who will be available during the time of the transport in case someone does not have a cell phone.

SOAR also gives volunteers window stickers to make it easy to recognize the next volunteer in a transport chain.

## **Reimbursement**

SOAR is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and as such we rely on the generosity of our supporters. We hope as much as possible that you can donate the expenses of a transport. If you would like, we can give you a letter to acknowledge your participation of a transport so that you have documentation come tax time.

If you feel you need to be reimbursed in order to transport, we do understand. We try as much as possible to use volunteers who are able to donate both their time and expenses.

## **Using a Semi-Truck**

SOAR has a long-haul semi-driver who regularly transports for us. If he happens to be going the same way a transport is needed, he may be able to handle quite a few miles. Our semi driver volunteer keeps the transportation coordinator informed of his routes.

## **Using Private Aircraft**

SOAR has a few volunteers with private airplanes that use them to transport Airedales. If it works out to transport an Airedale by airplane, our transportation coordinator will help set this up just like a ground transport. SOAR fully understands the need for the pilot to make a good weather decision and we will be prepared to make a back-up plan if things cannot happen on schedule.

A crate is a must for travel by private airplane. Most 4-seat aircraft will handle a size 4 airline crate which is one size smaller than what we normally use for our Airedales. You may have to break the crate down to get it in the airplane and then reassemble it.

Remember, if you decide to help SOAR transport an Airedale by private airplane, SOAR will not be able to reimburse you. Federal Aviation Regulations prohibit a pilot from taking compensation for a flight unless they are operating "for hire." SOAR will be happy to give you a letter acknowledging the flight for your taxes.

## **Using the Airlines**

SOAR has successfully transported several dogs via commercial airlines. We have a volunteer who works with American Airlines who has accompanied dogs on the same flight to get us a discount. Northwest Airlines has a good reputation with safe pet handling. Flying is stressful and frightening for the dog, but it is a few hours of stress compared to days of driving and being handled by multiple people if a long transport is necessary. We feel that if the journey is long, across multiple states requiring overnight stays, air travel is safer and preferable in most cases. For all the time and trouble in flying, it's proven to be safer as several dogs have been lost via ground transport.

## **Procedures for Flying a Dog on the Airlines**

### **Reservations**

- Heat is the number one killer of pets on airplanes. If daily temperatures are 70 degrees or more, you must reserve the first flight of the day to make sure the dog will not be subjected to hot temperatures.
- Make advance inquiries about flight times both departing and arriving. Be aware of time changes. You need the name of the departure airport as well as the arrival airport.
- Make sure the airplane can accommodate a Vari-Kennel 500.
- Confirm the paperwork you will need on the crate.
- You should make reservations no less than 24 hours before flight time (with Northwest Cargo Priority Pet if using Northwest.)
- Get directions to the cargo area of the airport. This area is generally located away from the main terminal.

### **Veterinarian**

- The dog must have a health certificate issued by a vet no more than 10 days in advance of the flight day. The receiving person's name, address and phone number goes on this certificate.
- Talk with the vet about a mild tranquilizer to take the edge off the flight. (Acepromazine or valium.) This is for the dog, not you! You should give any sedative just before loading the dog into the crate at the airport. If the dog looks drugged, they won't let him fly.

### **Prepare the Airline Crate:**

- Make a large sign for the top with:  
FROM (your name address and phone number)  
TO (person picking the dog up on the other end, name address and phone number)  
Tape this sign on the top of the crate along with the health certificate copy with clear packing tape. The airline staff must be able to clearly read all forms through the tape.
- Put the dogs vet records in a large envelope and tape to the top of the crate.
- Make another sign to hang on the door front saying "Caution, upset dog! Please open door and handle dog in a secure area only!"
- Include any other paperwork required by the airline.
- Put a blanket or rug in the bottom of the crate.
- Crate dishes must also be inside in case of emergency.
- Tape a freezer bag of food to the top of the crate, along with a leash (in case the person on the other end forgets to bring one.)

The dog should wear his collar with ID, (no choke chains.) Both sending and receiving a dog at the airport is a two-person job! The frightened dog will have to be handled as well as the crate. (Airport staff won't help.) Make sure whoever is meeting the dog on the other end is familiar with where and when to meet dog. Instruct them to open the crate door only in a closed room or office. The worst possible place to lose a dog is at a busy airport.