

## CONTAINER REQUIREMENT 1

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**The illustrations shown in this Container Requirement are examples only. Containers that conform to the principle of written standards for the species but look slightly different will still be considered compliant with IATA minimum standards.**

IATA activities are limited to the development of standards for the acceptance, packing and handling of live animals for transportation by air. IATA does not certify, approve, endorse, or sell any particular pet container manufacturer, brand, make, or model. Equally so, IATA does not offer, solicit, endorse, or approve any particular pet or puppy transport or relocation services, regardless of whether these be offered via email or the internet. Readers should pay attention to fraudulent offerings that claim the opposite.

**Applicable to:**

- Cats (domestic)
- Dogs (domestic)

**Note:**

*For carriage of domestic pets in passenger cabins as accompanied baggage see [Chapters 2 and 3](#).*

*For animals travelling in the aircraft cabin the travelling non-rigid container must:*

- Meet these container requirements except that the container construction does not have to be rigid and spacer bars are not required.*
- Allow the animal contained in the container to have enough space to turn about normally while standing, to stand and sit erect, and to lie in a natural position.*
- The ventilated area must be at least 16% of the total surface of the four sides of the containers.*
- The container must be clearly marked with a Live Animal label and the label must not block any of the ventilation openings.*
- Meet these container requirements except that the container does not need to have water and food containers.*
- The requirement for one end of the container to be welded wire mesh does not apply to soft side/cloth bags.*

*The check-in staff is responsible for ensuring the container meets the IATA requirements. Should the container not meet the minimum standards the animal must not be allowed to travel.*

## 1. CONTAINER CONSTRUCTION

### Principles of Design

The following principles of design must be met in addition to the General Container Requirements outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

The interior of the container must be smooth with no protrusions that the animal can bite or scratch to cause damage to the integrity of the container in any way.

All openings must be nose and paw proof to avoid injury to the animal and handlers.

Openings must be a maximum of 25 mm x 25 mm (1 in x 1 in) for dogs and 19 mm x 19 mm ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in x  $\frac{3}{4}$  in) for cats. The openings may have to be smaller in order to be nose and paw proof.

If a container has wheels, they must be removed or rendered inoperable.


### Materials

Fibreglass, metal, rigid plastics, welded wire mesh, solid wood or plywood.

All wood used for the construction of containers for international transport must comply with IPPC standards.

For all containers the welded wire mesh must be 2.5 mm or thicker for dogs and 2.0 mm or thicker for cats.

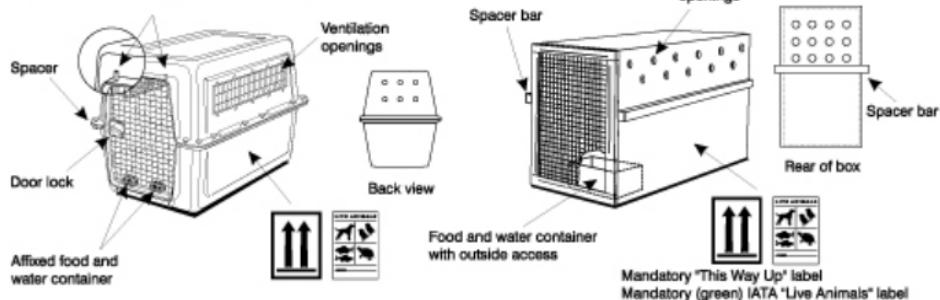
Containers made entirely of welded mesh or any other type of wire mesh are not suitable must not be used for air transport.

Plastic: Rigid plastic containers  are suitable for most breeds of dogs but their acceptability is at the discretion of the carrier. Some rigid plastic containers may not be suitable for large dogs, or dogs that are aggressive.

Example of a rigid plastic container and an example of a wooden container:

#### TYPICAL RIGID PLASTIC DOG CONTAINER

Locking pins must engage the container beyond the extrusions by at least 1.6 cm ( $\frac{5}{8}$  in)



### Size (Mandatory performance requirements when selecting a shipping container)

Each animal in the container must have enough space to stand, to sit erect, to lie in a natural

position and to turn about normally while standing.

### Guidance on Calculating Minimum Container Dimensions

To assist in determining the approximate size of the traveling container, the following formula may be useful. However, it may need to be adjusted to meet the mandatory performance requirements listed previously. When calculating the minimum internal height of the container, the height of bedding should be added to the height of the animal.

Animal measurements:

A = length of animal from tip of nose to base/root of tail.

B = height from ground to elbow joint.

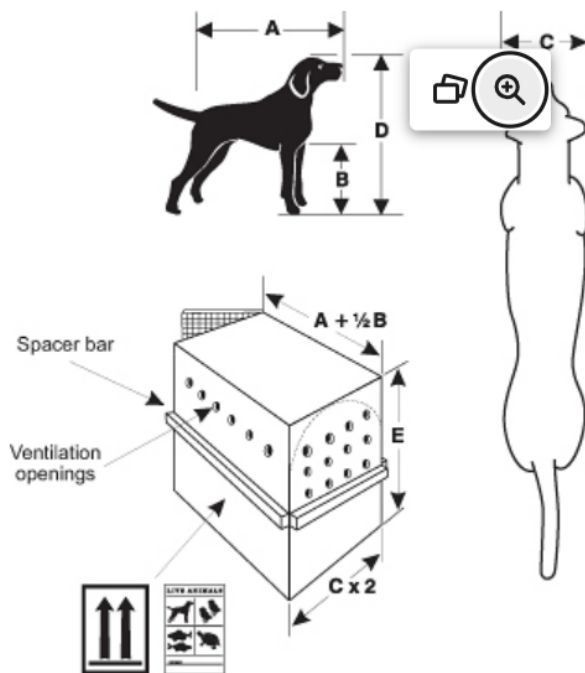
C = width across shoulders or widest point (whichever is the greater).

D = height of animal in natural standing position from top of the head or the ear tip to the floor (whichever is higher).

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#### **Note:**

*Measurements A, B, C and D for determining the container dimensions must relate to the largest animal.*



The calculated dimensions are internal container dimensions.

**Minimum internal container dimensions for a single animal:**

Container length =  $A + \frac{1}{2} B$

Container width =  $C \times 2$

Container height  $E = D + \text{bedding}$

Snub-nosed breeds require 10% larger container.

**Note:**

*Container width calculation for multiple animals:*

- *Two animals:  $C \times 3$*
- *Three animals:  $C \times 4$*

*The height and length are determined the same as for a single animal.*

**Crating animals together:**

Weaned puppies or kittens may travel well together in the same primary enclosure. When crating puppies or kittens together in the same container/primary enclosure they must be from the same litter, not older than six months, weigh no more than 14 kg each and no more than three per container. Certain national regulations require cats or dogs to be crated individually unless the consignment is a litter over 8 weeks and travelling with the mother.

A maximum of two adult animals of comparable size up to 14 kg each, that are compatible in size and used to cohabiting, may be shipped in the same container/primary enclosure. Animals over 14 kg must be crated individually.

**Sides**

Side walls must be solid with sufficient ventilation as prescribed.

Plastic containers: Where containers are assembled from a top and bottom part, these must be securely bolted together. Plastic clips must not be the only fasteners holding the top and bottom part together, the use of metal nuts and bolts in every hole is recommended.

Wooden containers: For containers made of wood, or plywood, the minimum thickness of the sides is 12 mm (1/2 in) for dogs and 6 mm (1/4 in) for cats.

**Floor**

The floor must be solid and leak-proof.

**Roof**

The roof must be solid, but ventilation holes and welded wire mesh are allowed over the whole surface provided that they do not reduce the integrity of the container and the strength of the roof itself.

Wooden containers: For containers made of wood or plywood, the minimum thickness of the roof must be 12 mm (1/2 in) for both dogs and cats.

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## **Door**

The door must be constructed of plastic, wood, plywood, welded or cast metal of sufficient thickness so as to preclude the animal from bending or distorting the door.

The door must form the whole of one end of the container. It can be either sliding or hinged.

For all containers using doors with locking pins, the pins must engage the container by at least 1.6 cm (5/8 in). The shipper must ensure that all hardware and fasteners are in place and serviceable.

Plastic containers: Doors made of plastic are permitted, provided that hinges and locking pins are made of metal of sufficient thickness.

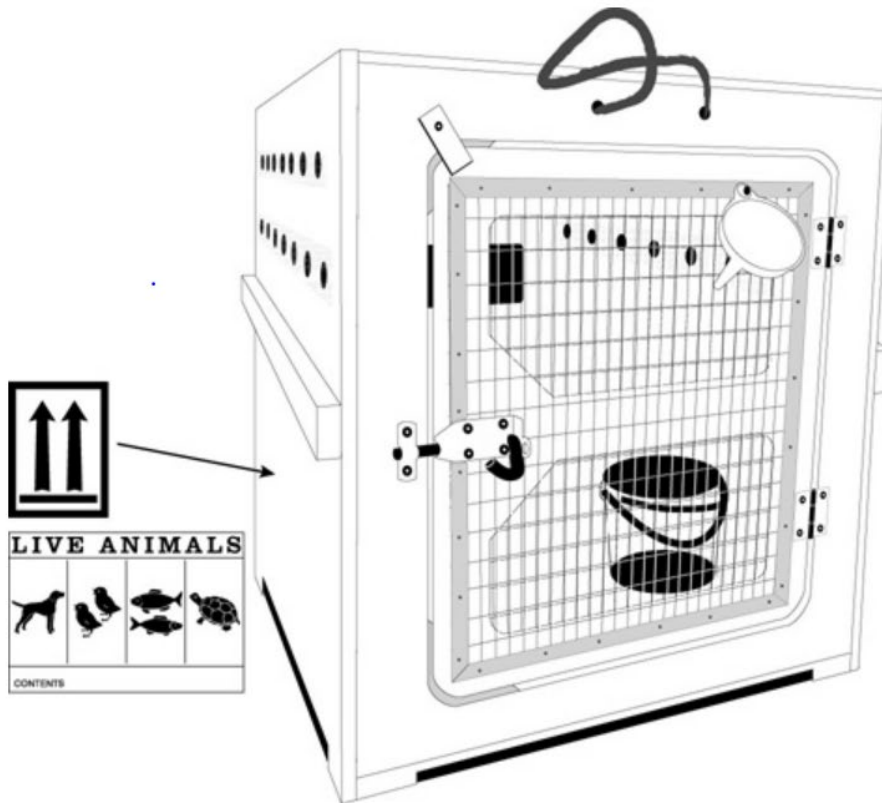
When rigid plastic containers are used the door should be further secured by application of additional removable fasteners such as cable ties in the four corners of the door frame. Care must be taken when selecting the fasteners to ensure these will not cause injury to the animal or to the handling personnel.

There must be an adequate means of fastening and sealing for containers travelling to countries where sealing is required.

The maximum size openings in the welded mesh must be 25 mm × 25 mm (1 in × 1 in) for dogs, and 19 mm × 19 mm ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in ×  $\frac{3}{4}$  in) for cats. However, the openings may have to be smaller in order to be nose and paw proof. The welded mesh must fully overlap the frame. It must be attached to the outside of the frame using staples at least 19 mm ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in) long and at intervals of no

more than 25 mm (1 in). In addition, for dog containers made of wood, a wooden frame or strips of wood (to IPPC regulations or manufactured wood e.g. exterior grade ply) must be placed over the edges of the wire and affixed with screws. This compresses the wire between the strips of wood and the outer surface of the container. The wooden compression strips/frame must be at least 12 mm thick and of a placement to adequately secure the wire. Fasteners must not penetrate into the container.





### **Ventilation**

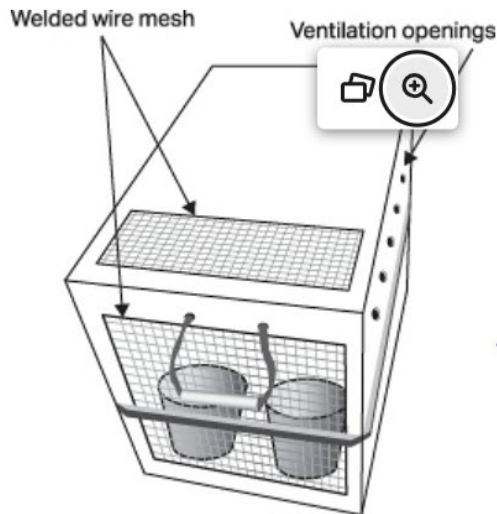
The total ventilated area must be at least 16% of the total surface of the four sides. The provision of additional ventilation openings on the roof or sides of the container or larger ventilation openings covered in welded wire mesh in order to increase the ventilation are permitted.

Ventilation must be provided on all 4 sides of the container. Ventilation openings on the sides and the back must be placed over the upper two thirds of the container.

The whole of one end of the container (which can be the door) must be ventilated from the top to the bottom.

The welded wire mesh insert covering ventilation openings must be securely fixed to the container so that the animal cannot dislodge it.

All openings must be nose and paw-proof, in the case of cats and small dogs these may have to be covered with a second layer of wire mesh. Where a second layer of welded wire mesh is required to make the container nose and paw proof both layers of mesh must meet the minimum standards prescribed for the species. It is very important that no animal has any surface or edge at which it can gnaw or scratch.



### **Wood/Plywood Containers**

Where ventilation is provided by welded wire mesh it must fully overlap the frame. It must be attached to the outside of the frame using staples at least 19 mm ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in) long and at intervals of no more than 25 mm (1 in). In addition, for dog containers made of wood/plywood, a wood/plywood frame or strips of wood/plywood must be placed over the edges of the welded wire mesh and affixed with screws. This compresses the welded wire mesh between the strips of wood/plywood and the outer surface of the container. The wood/plywood compression strips/frame must be at least 12 mm thick and of a placement to adequately secure the wire. Fasteners must not penetrate into the container.

### **Spacer Bars**

Must be provided along both long sides of the container. A spacer bar must also be provided along the back of the container.

Spacer devices must be positioned to prevent other freight blocking the ventilation.

### **Handles**

Appropriate handles must be provided. Spacer bars where suitable may be considered as the handles. Handles must provide the handlers a means to move the container without a risk of being scratched or bitten by the animal.

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### **Forklift Spacers**

Must be provided for all containers where the total weight with the animal exceeds 60 kg (132 lb) and must be a minimum 5 cm (2 in) in height.

### **Bedding**

Absorbent bedding must be provided that is suitable for the species.

### **SPF Containers**

Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) dogs and cats must be transported in containers that conform to the requirements published in this Container Requirement. A "Laboratory Animals" label must be affixed to the container and "This Way Up" labels must be placed on at least two opposite sides. Filter containers for SPF consignments have special gauge air filters fixed in the ventilation apertures. Ventilation must be a minimum of 16% of the surface area of the four sides. Sufficient water must be provided for the journey. Food must be provided, if required, at the point of origin in order that the sealed container is not opened during transport. A viewing panel must be provided on SPF containers.

### **Labelling**

A green "Live Animals" label/tag or a red "Laboratory Animals" label/tag is mandatory on all live animal consignments. "This Way Up" labels/tags are also mandatory and must be placed on at least two opposite sides. The label or tag can be imprinted on the container.

### **Notes:**

1. *A maximum of two adult animals of comparable size up to 14 kg each, that are compatible, may be shipped in the same container. Animals over that weight must travel individually.*
2. *Animals up to six months old from the same litter, up to 14 kg each, up to a maximum quantity of three, may be shipped in the same container/compartment.*



## **2. PREPARATIONS BEFORE DISPATCH (see [Chapter 5](#))**

**Tranquillization of dogs and cats is not recommended.**

Sedation of animals, except under certain conditions and carried out under veterinary direction, is not recommended. Most, if not all, commonly used tranquillizing drugs have the effect of lowering the blood pressure, this also occurs naturally at high altitudes. The air pressure of an aircraft in flight is set at the equivalent of approximately 8,000 ft.

The combination of altitude and drugs is potentially fatal in the old, chronically sick or stressed animals. Calming by darkening the container and putting it in a quiet place when not in the aircraft, will calm most animals. If sedatives are used, the name of the drug, the time and route of administration must be clearly marked on the container and a copy of the record must be attached to the documents relating to that shipment. Any further medication administered must be recorded and accompany the shipment with the name of the sedative, time of administration and the route of administration.

Shipment of females in heat (oestrus) is not recommended.

Females with suckling young and unweaned animals must not be accepted for carriage.

Weaned puppies and kittens younger than eight weeks must not be shipped due to possible dehydration effects in air transportation.

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Dogs and cats should only be shipped during the first two thirds of pregnancy. During the last one third of pregnancy the chance of spontaneous abortion or injury to the fetus increases. Significant debilitation or death of the mother can be initiated by the stress that may occur during transportation at this time in gestation.

Dogs and cats should not be shipped for seven days following giving birth.

It is recommended that the shipper removes collars/vests/harnesses/clothing and electronic GPS trackers from animals prior to crating. If GPS trackers or any other recording equipment are used, they must fully comply with IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations and must be declared to the airline.

## **3. FEEDING AND WATERING**

A water container must be present and affixed within the shipping container with outside access for filling that does not require the opening of the shipping container allowing potential escape of the animal. Food containers must be present either within the container, if sealed, or attached to it. Food may be attached to the travelling container for use in case of delay. Note illustrations are examples only, containers or receptacles that are attached may look different provided they meet the standards described.

**Note:**

- *Water containers must be open on the top surface allowing the animal unrestricted access and must be securely affixed to the inside of the shipping container so they can't be dislodged.*
- *Water bottles or similar dispensers that are attached either inside or outside the shipping container are not considered to be open containers and shall not be used to replace open containers.*

Feed the animal a light meal at least two hours before dispatch, provide a short drink and exercise the animal immediately before crating.

Animals do not normally require additional feeding during 12 hours following the time of dispatch. Water must be provided if total journey time exceeds 12 hours. Care must be taken not to overfill the container.

If feeding is required due to an unforeseen delay, meat, biscuits or canned pet food must be provided but care must be taken not to overfeed. Animals must not fly within 2 hours after their meal.

#### **4. GENERAL CARE AND LOADING (see [Chapters 5](#) and [10](#))**

Cats and dogs may be loaded in the same hold/on the same pallet provided they are not facing each other.

Accompanied dogs and cats that are transported in the aircraft hold must comply with these Regulations.

**Warning 1:** *Snub-nosed dogs must be stowed as far away as practical from other loads to ensure they have the largest amount of air space available in the hold.*

**Warning 2:** *If it is necessary to open the container for any reason, this must always be done in an enclosed area in order to prevent the animals from escaping.*

Animals travelling under quarantine must be segregated from those which are not.

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