



The dog crate, also referred to as a dog cage or indoor kennel is designed as a safe, secure area that a dog can go into for short periods of time.

A dog crate usually consists of a wire frame with a removable tray within the base where the dog's bedding can be placed, but they are available in many different sizes, designs and materials.

Dog crates are widely available and have five main uses:

- **Open 'den' area.** Some dogs appear to benefit from having an open 'den' that they can use as a safe place where they feel secure and comfortable.
- **Training aid.** For example helping puppies to learn to be left alone or for helping with toilet training.
- **Short-term confinement.** For example, where owner supervision is not possible.
- **Veterinary advised.** In some circumstances a vet may advise the use of a crate, for example to aid recovery after surgery.
- **Transportation.** To help keep dogs secure and comfortable whilst being transported.



RSPCA POSITION AND ADVICE

The information below gives some important recommendations that will help you to ensure that the welfare of your dog is not compromised when using a dog crate:

- When choosing a crate, it must be secure and the materials should not pose any risk or place your dog in any danger.
- The crate must be comfortable, dry and clean.
- The crate should be an area in which your dog feels safe and secure. To ensure this, your dog should be introduced to the crate gradually using positive reward-based training methods.
- There should be adequate ventilation and airflow.
- The crate should never be used to punish your dog and he/she should never be in a crate for any length of time or in any situation that could cause him/her distress or suffering.
- Although individual dogs vary in how they show signs of distress they may show signs such as:
 - excessive vocalisation e.g. barking, howling, whining
 - panting
 - hiding
 - cowering
 - aggression.





When using a crate, owners should ensure that their dog(s):

- have constant access to fresh, clean drinking water
- are able to get out of the crate at regular intervals for exercise and to go to the toilet, unless otherwise advised by a vet
- have regular opportunities to interact positively with suitable companions (e.g. humans and dogs) so that they do not become lonely or bored
- are provided with safe, suitable objects to chew and play with so that they do not become distressed or bored.



The use of dog crates in the home environment

In addition to the above general advice, the RSPCA recommend the following:

- To ensure the correct size is chosen, as a minimum, an adult dog must be able to sit and stand at full height, turn around, stretch and lie down in a natural position. This should be considered when buying a crate for a puppy. Whether or not it is appropriate to place more than one dog in a crate will be dependent upon the individual dogs' behaviour. There should always be enough resources e.g. bedding, toys, for each dog.
- When finding a suitable place for a crate it must not be placed in direct sunlight, or in a draught.
- It must not be placed anywhere that puts the dog at risk or in danger.



A dog crate should never be used to prevent unwanted behaviours in the home, for example destructive behaviour. If an owner is concerned about their dog's behaviour they should seek the advice of a [vet](#) who will be able to refer them to a [clinical animal behaviourist](#) if necessary.

The use of dog crates for transportation

Under the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997, a person must not transport any animal in a way which causes or is likely to cause injury or unnecessary suffering to that animal. It is also important when in a vehicle that a dog is suitably restrained so it cannot distract the driver while they are driving or injure anyone if the driver has to stop quickly (UK Highway Code). The RSPCA therefore recommends that any dog is both secure and comfortable during transport. A popular method of doing this is to use a dog crate.

In addition to the above general advice, the RSPCA recommend the following:

- To ensure the correct size is chosen, a dog/puppy must be able to sit and stand at full height, turn around easily, stretch and lie down in a natural position. However, the crate must not be so big that the dog/puppy will slip around too much during transport.





- Suitable bedding should be placed on the floor to prevent the dog from slipping during the journey.

Owners should also ensure that their dog:

- has regular access to fresh, clean drinking water
- can see out of the crate.

A dog should never be left in a car on a warm, sunny day as it could result in suffering, heat stroke and even death. If an owner has to take their dog in the car with them on a hot day they should ensure that the destination is dog friendly so that the dog can be removed from the car to an area with plenty of shade and that they provide the dog with constant access to fresh, clean drinking water.



OTHER POSSIBLE LINKS:

- [Dog welfare needs](#) webpage
- FAQ: [Safely transporting your dog in a car](#)
- [Keep Cool](#): Dogs die in hot cars
- [Find a vet](#)
- [Find a behaviourist](#)
- [Animal welfare act webpage](#)

Links to the web pages of other organisations are provided for additional information only and do not imply any endorsement by the RSPCA of those organisations or of any content on the website.

This factsheet has been produced by the RSPCA Companion Animals Department (V3 CAD/LR 16.12.11). This leaflet is provided for general information only and is not intended to be relied upon as specific advice. Whilst we try to ensure that the information is correct, we cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information, nor for any reliance on or use of the leaflet.

