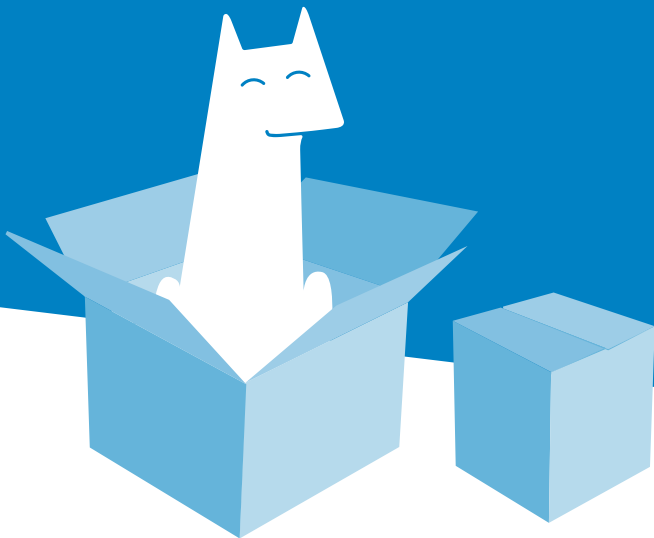


Moving house



CATS PROTECTION
ESSENTIAL GUIDE 3



On the move

Moving house can be a big deal for cats – much of their feeling of security and ability to relax comes from being surrounded by the familiar sights, sounds and scents of their own territory. It is also very stressful for humans too, so some thought and careful planning will ensure it's a smooth move for everyone.

Planning ahead

There are two options for moving day: booking your cat into a cattery or taking them with you as you move. Which one you choose depends on your own personal preference and your cat's character, as every cat is different.

Booking your cat into a boarding cattery

If you book your cat into a boarding cattery for a few days, you won't have to worry about them while you move. This may be the easiest solution for both of you, but you will need to organise it well in advance and make sure your cat's vaccinations are up to date prior to moving.



Keeping your cat with you

This option requires a bit more planning. What follows is just a guide and, as everyone's circumstances are different, you may need to alter parts of it to fit your own situation and your cat's character.

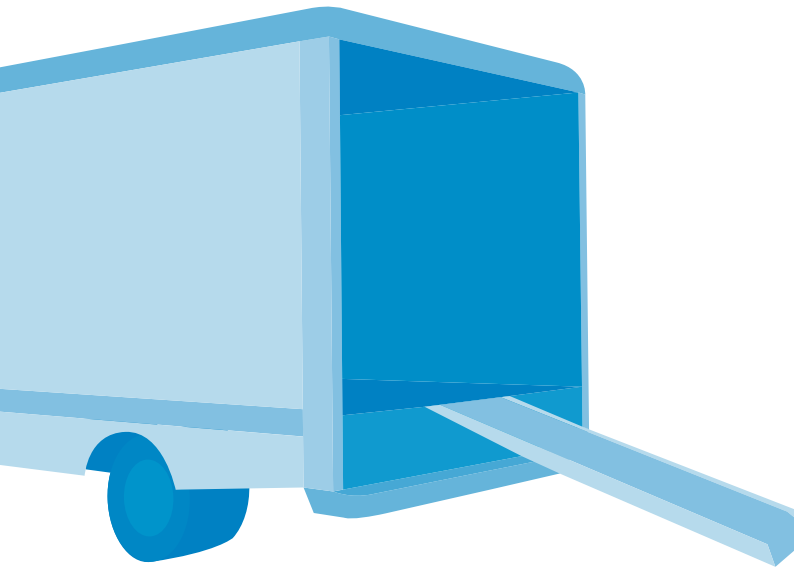
First, allocate a room in your home that can be cleared of furniture a week or two before the move. At the same time, decide on a room in the new home where you can put your cat when you get there. Ideally, both rooms should be out of the way so your cat can be left undisturbed for as much of the move as possible.

About a week before the big day, start getting your cat used to 'their' room. Pop an additional sleeping place, litter tray, cat carrier and blanket in there. You could begin feeding them here too so they become really familiar with their 'safe place'. On the evening before the move, move their scratching post, toys and water bowl into the room and shut them in to make sure they don't go missing. If you have more than one cat, make sure they have separate resources if possible, to help prevent further stress or any toileting accidents. If you know your cats don't enjoy each other's company, it may be better to give them separate 'safe rooms'. You could also use a synthetic form of facial pheromones, which are available from your vet. Feliway is available as a plug in diffuser or a spray. The scent helps to create a reassuring environment and may help to reduce stress.

Moving day

If you are taking your cat to a cattery, do this the day before if possible, so they are away from all the commotion.

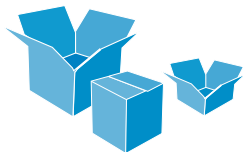
If they are staying at home, keep them in their room, feed them a small meal, make sure they have fresh water, clean the litter tray and shut the door. Once you are ready to leave, you can put them into their carrier and load them into the car along with all of their belongings. Your cat may be less anxious if the carrier is sprayed with the synthetic facial pheromones a few minutes before placing your cat in the carrier. If they are prone to travel sickness it is worth withholding food for three to four hours before the journey.



Once you have arrived at your new home, take them to their secure room with all their familiar bits and pieces. You might also like to give them something that smells of you, like an unwashed item of clothing, to help them settle. Provide them with something to eat, a box or something to hide in and make sure they have a litter tray. Then close the door and leave your cat alone for a while – tell the removal staff and the rest of the family which room your cat is in so they don't disturb them or accidentally let them out. You may also want to tack a sign on the door.

A helping hand

Talk to your vet about artificial pheromone products such as Feliway. When cats rub their faces around furniture, corners or doorways they are making themselves feel secure by marking their home territory. Artificial pheromone sprays and diffusers are available that mimic the scent from a cat's facial glands, helping cats to feel more secure. You can get these artificial pheromones from the vet and use them in your cat's new room to help them settle in. Alternatively, you can take a clean, unused cloth and wipe it around your cat's face to pick up their own scents and then wipe this around the furniture at cat height.



Settling in

It is a good idea to keep your cat in their new room for a few days; it can be overwhelming to have access to the whole of the house straight away. Most cats will let you know when they are ready to venture further and it very much depends on your cat's individual character. However, when you let them see the rest of the house, make sure that all doors, windows and cat flaps are closed – they're not ready for the outside world yet! Make sure they always have access to their 'safe room' in case they feel the need to retreat.



Going outside

It's important that your cat feels relaxed and secure in their new house before exploring the great outdoors. Some cats go missing shortly after moving house because owners have let their cats go outside too soon. These cats sometimes find their way back to their old houses. Cats should be kept indoors for at least three weeks to allow them time to regard the new house as a secure place and to build up a scent profile to help them find their way back.

When you do let them out:

- do it just before a mealtime when they are hungry so you can call them back with their favourite food
- open the door and step outside encouraging your cat to go with you
- don't pick them up – let them make the decision to go outside themselves
- leave the door open so they can run back into the house if they feel insecure
- only let them out for short periods at first – you can gradually build up the time they are out until you are confident they can come and go as they please

Before letting your cat out, make sure they are microchipped so if they wander off they can be traced easily. If they are already microchipped, don't forget to change your address details on the central database when you move.

Also, don't forget to register with a new vet, who is likely to request your cat's veterinary history from your previous practice. If your cat has existing health issues, you may wish to organise this before you move. For further details, see our [Veterinary Guide: You and your vet](#).

Foreign travel and bringing cats to the UK

It is currently illegal to bring a cat to the UK from any country overseas without it either going through quarantine or being imported via the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS).

PETS allows pet dogs, cats and ferrets entry to the UK from a number of specified countries without the need for quarantine. Animals entering the UK without a valid pet passport must spend time in quarantine on arrival, until they have complied with the requirement of PETS.

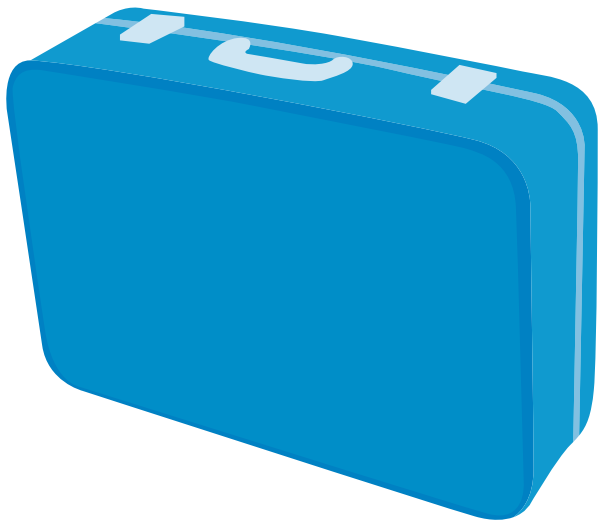
The process of applying for a pet passport depends on the country the cat will be travelling from. Check the government website www.gov.uk or contact Defra on 0370 241 1710 for concise details. All cats must first be microchipped, then vaccinated against rabies and a blood test may be required. There is then a waiting period of weeks to months before the cat is allowed to travel to the UK.

There are specific routes pets must take, whether via air, sea or rail, with approved transport carriers and there are restrictions on the number of pets that may travel.

In the event of a problem with any part of the procedure, the cat may have to go into quarantine pending resolution, so owners should be prepared for further expense.

If you are travelling abroad with your cat, as well as fulfilling all the correct requirements for re-entering the UK, remember that you need to fulfil the entry requirements of the country you are visiting. Again, www.gov.uk is the best source of current information.

Before considering a pet passport for your cat, particularly for short-term holidays, think carefully about your cat's health and behaviour and whether the travel, change of environment, change of climate and potential exposure to exotic diseases will cause your cat unnecessary stress. You may want to consider alternative options, such as a boarding cattery temporarily, or possibly even rehoming your cat. Speak with your vet for advice on your particular cat.



Foreign microchips

Whether moving one mile or 10,000 it is vital to update the details stored on your microchip with contact details for the country you are in. In the UK you can do this by contacting Petlog – on 0844 4633 999 or via www.petlog.org.uk – or Anibase – on 01904 487 600 or via www.anibase.com – **simply putting your cat through the pet travel scheme or quarantine does not automatically update your records, so it is important that you remember to do this.** Your cat may face a further period in quarantine or even euthanasia by the authorities if they become lost, you cannot be traced and their legal entry to the UK cannot be ascertained. For your own records also, keep your cat's unique microchip number safe.

For more information see Cats Protection's *Essential Guides: Keeping your cat safe* and *Microchipping*.



Veterinary care

The veterinary care recommendations in the country you move to may differ from those in the country you have moved from and may depend on the way cats are cared for in those countries and the presence and rate of different diseases seen. For example, vaccination and worming protocols may differ, as may the licensed treatments available. It is important to find yourself a vet in your local area.

In the UK, the Find a Vet website page on www.rcvs.org.uk lists your nearest veterinary surgeries that are registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons by postcode.

It would also be advisable to consider taking out pet insurance and checking whether the policy will offer your cat cover if they are out of their normal country of residence.



Learn more about your cat online!

Take a look at our free interactive tool to help you understand cats' origins and their behaviour within our homes. <http://learnonline.cats.org.uk/content/ufo>

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For more information about Cats Protection or to make a donation, please visit www.cats.org.uk or phone our Helpline on 03000 12 12 12.

Reg Charity 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland)

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