

Petiquette: Being a good neighbor

by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak



Can I travel with my pets? Yes! RVers travel most commonly with dogs or cats though I've heard of birds, fish and horses too. Whichever pet you travel with, have a health certificate and a record of their shots. Some RV parks do not allow pets or restrict the number, size or breed so check ahead.

While most RVers are responsible pet owners, the few who aren't can jeopardize the ability of all pet owners to stay in a park. Here are a few reminders for being a good neighbor:

- Keep your pet on 6-foot leash and under your control. A child should not walk a dog unless he is strong enough to handle it. Even a normally docile dog can be attacked by another or get scared. Cats should be in a harness and on a leash if they come outside the RV.
- Take your dog right to the area designated for dog walking. Other guests do not appreciate having dogs - or cats - use their tires as posts or leave deposits on their site.
- Pick up after your pet. Carry a plastic bag or two so you are prepared.
- Do not allow your pet to cut across or through other RV sites. That is the guest's "private property" for the time they are here.
- Leave your pet in your RV when you visit the restrooms, laundry or office.
- Don't leave your pet unattended outside your rig. All sorts of calamities could occur. Someone walks through your site and upset your pet, a loose dog bothers yours, a child approaches your pet, a coyote could snatch a small pet even in an RV park. Someone could even take your pet. Don't take a chance.
- Remember, no matter how friendly and well-behaved your pet is, some people are deathly afraid of animals or allergic. Make sure the other person welcomes attention. Be prepared to educate people, especially children, on how to approach and pet your dog or cat.
- Teach your dog not to bark more than once. A noisy dog will be most unwelcome, especially if it barks continuously at everything that walks by. Squirt guns and other devices can assist with training.



•When leaving your pet in the RV while you are gone, make sure the temperature stays comfortable. Leaving the AC on or a TV or radio on low volume will mask outside noises. If you will be gone an extended time, check to see if someone in the park could walk your dog while you're gone. Perhaps another guest who is a pet owner would do it for you or you could trade days so you could each enjoy the area.

Traveling with a pet can add much enjoyment. Though I no longer have a dog, I loved watching him sniff out a new area. He loved his walks and so did I. Most pets can adjust to traveling, given time and patience. Travel safe in your RV. Crates and doggie seatbelts are the safest way for your pet to travel.

Two other tidbits:

- What to do with that kitty litter box? Some people use the shower but RV friends of ours made an opening in the cabinet and floor right by the doorway so the cat could go down into the first compartment under the rig. The litter box was in there. The cat liked her hidey-hole, it was private and didn't smell up the RV.
- Insure your pet. Did you know Progressive Insurance, which insures full-time RVers, also insures your pet in case of an accident? Contact them to add your pet. Last I heard, it was free if you have standard collision coverage.

Happy and safe travels with your pet!