

Before the flight: the checklist

The flight is the part your dog sleeps through. The weeks before are where it goes right or wrong.

Count back from the flight date and write a real date beside each stage. If you have less time, the dates squeeze; the order doesn't. The crate comes first, always, because it's the slowest thing to build and the only thing you can't fix after landing.

Flight date _____

Handover time _____

Eight weeks out

date _____

- ☐ Airline crate bought, built, in the busiest room, uncovered
- ☐ Every meal in the crate, door open; the chew lives in the crate only
- ☐ Written down: what a Tuesday looks like for the dog in the new place, and how it differs from now
- ☐ Toilet word started on the current surface
- ☐ Flight legs confirmed, hold or cabin; soft carrier bought if cabin

Six weeks out

date _____

- ☐ Door closed for sleeps, the night the dog is already lying flat inside; the door never opens for noise
- ☐ New toilet arrangement started (turf square on concrete, or your version)
- ☐ First rehearsal of the new way of getting around: busy strip, long drive, or the park walked past on a lead
- ☐ Marking stopped: one wee to empty at the start, then walk

Four weeks out

date _____

- ☐ Dog sleeps in the crate every night
- ☐ Crate rides in the car with the dog inside, twice a week
- ☐ Turf square halved, then gone
- ☐ A lift, a tram or train, a shopping centre
- ☐ Soft carrier ten minutes a day if there's a cabin leg

Two weeks out

date _____

- ☐ Garden closed: every wee on the lead, on the new surface, on the word
- ☐ Airport recording during crate rest, quiet first, then loud
- ☐ Crate carried by someone the dog doesn't live with
- ☐ The three rules (over the page) on the fridge for whoever has the dog

Final week

date _____

- ☐ Nothing new. No farewell outing. One quiet day before the flight
- ☐ Same food packed for the first week landed
- ☐ Last meal about four hours before handover; last wee at handover, on the word
- ☐ Nobody cries at the crate. Goodbyes are the night before

First week landed

date _____

- ☐ Toilet trip within an hour of collection, then the crate in the busiest room and a day of nothing
- ☐ Three lead toilet trips a day at fixed times
- ☐ Short walks on the block. No greetings, no park, no visitors
- ☐ Window blocked if the dog patrols it

The three rules for whoever has the dog

Print this. Put it on the fridge. It has to survive the least consistent person in the house.

1. The dog sleeps in the crate every night.

Door shut. Not covered. In the busiest room. No exceptions for whinging. If the noise goes past twenty minutes on night one, message the trainer. Do not open the door.

2. Every wee is on the lead, at the spot, on the word.

No garden. Two minutes at the spot, then back inside. The old toilet is finished.

3. Walks are outings.

One walk with the dog next to you, one toilet trip. No dog greetings, no off lead, no park. The rest of the day is rest in the crate or play in the house.

The toilet word

The wee spot

Trainer

Owner overseas

NOT GOING ON THE PLANE

Sedatives: the Australian Veterinary Association says no, and the airline can refuse a dog that looks unwell at the terminal. Toys and chews: airlines don't allow them in the crate. Fluffy beds and bulky bedding: same. A blanket the dog has never slept with. A big meal. A last trip to the park.

This is the short version.

Flight-Ready is the full plan: the crate as a bedroom, an audit of where your dog is actually landing, three worked examples, a fillable dated timeline, the letter to hand whoever minds the dog, a crate log and the handover list. \$49 at dionathetrainer.com/flight-ready. If you'd rather run it with me on video, the four week online program starts with a consultation.

Diona Chu is a Melbourne dog trainer (BVSc, MEd) with fifteen years across zoo, wildlife, assistance dog and private training, and 240+ five-star Google reviews. Pet transport companies: you're welcome to give this checklist to your customers as is. happydogs@dionathetrainer.com