

## Crates and Crate Training

Crates are invaluable tools for all dog owners. A crate can quickly become the puppy's safe place. It can help with the training to become polite members of the family. "Out of sight - in trouble" is a very good motto with a new puppy! A crate can help!

When you get your puppy home start introducing your puppy to his crate as soon as you can. Toss small treats into the crate for puppy to find. Place some soft toys in the crate for puppy to play with. The cosy blanket from his mother will help make him feel calm and safe. While learning about the crate, praise your dog every time he goes into his crate. Never open the door when the puppy is barking (unless it is the middle of the night and he just started barking). Make this a place your dog will enjoy going into. It should be his safe place. It must never be used as a form of punishment. A crate will ensure your puppy cannot get into any harm while you are out or at night when all the family members are sleeping. It also aids in house training. A dog will not soil where he sleeps if he can help it. We prefer that our puppy owners use the crates that have all four sides with metal framework. This allows for more air circulation and prevents overheating on warmer days. A Portuguese Water dog is comfortable in a 36" x 24" crate. When the puppy comes home, the use of a crate divider works well to keep puppy in a smaller, cozier area. He will feel safer and the smaller area will help teach puppy not to soil in his crate. These crate dividers usually come with a new crate or can be purchased separately at any pet supply store. As the puppy grows, the divider can be moved further and further back into the crate until it is no longer needed (and that always seems to happen so fast!).

We prefer to have our dogs travel in our cars in well secured metal crates. They love their own space and, in the terrifying event of a car accident, the crate will keep you and your puppy safer. In the absence of a crate in the car, there are many different styles of dog restraint systems that work very well. Puppy should have his own seat in the car so he will know where his place is every time he gets in the car to go somewhere with his family. Just remember that allowing your dog the freedom to roam the car at will or stick his head out the window can have frightening results. In a collision a dog quickly becomes a heavy projectile and allowing a dog to stick his head out the window can result in a damaged eye or a dog that leaps out the window completely unexpectedly. Restraining your puppy in the car makes so much sense. Keeping him safe is what we would do for any of our loved ones.

Two more things to remember – Please never leave your dog in his crate with a collar on. The collar can get caught on the wire sides and puppy can accidentally strangle. This has happened in the past and can be a heartache too devastating for all.

Also, please allow funds for a good crate. The crate you buy for your puppy will be part of his life forever. My crates have been used for multiple dogs and are still safe enough to use for my next puppy!