



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR MOBILITY COMMAND



ALERT MESSAGE

15 July 2022

Patriot Express Pet Owners,

This is an alert message. You need to know my Team and I take the responsibility of moving your pet seriously. As a pet owner with five overseas tours, I'm intimately aware of the risk, expense, and extreme concern when it comes to these important members of our families.

We've had three pet fatalities on Patriot Express flights in the last two weeks, which is unacceptable. AMC is reviewing every aspect of Patriot Express pet travel, including equities beyond our responsibility, to further strengthen pet safety. We will hold ourselves accountable to a high standard and will positively influence every service agency involved in the pet movement enterprise.

We've made immediate improvements such as increasing owners' access to pets during layovers, comfort breaks, allowing pets in climate-controlled terminals, and cooling the cargo holds during loading and unloading. We will continue to implement further improvements as the review process matures.

It is extremely important that pet owners understand the following when planning air travel for pets, especially dogs. Besides the heat and stress of air travel, there have been commonalities amongst some of the recent fatalities that you need to be aware of now. Pet health, age, breed, and sedation appear to be contributing factors.

Your veterinarian is the expert on these factors and **must** also consider length of travel, number of layovers, number of transfers, and enroute climate conditions when approving and advising your pet travel. It is imperative you understand that the process we are improving cannot completely mitigate risks associated with certain health, breed, and sedation challenges. If you are unsure about the risk, please show your veterinarian this alert message and clarify with detail the specifics of your travel. Consider delaying your pet travel until you and your veterinarian are comfortable.

The easy thing to do during these challenging times is to immediately align AMC pet travel policies with airline industry standards, which would severely restrict, and in substantial numbers, eliminate travel for specific breeds, health conditions, and climate environments. Doing so would leave thousands of military pet owners with expensive and limited-to-no travel options. I intend to partner with the transportation enterprise, the community I serve, and my team to work through this responsibly to ensure happy arrivals at PCS destinations.

You can contact me directly with suggestions and concerns at PatriotPets@us.af.mil.

MICHAEL A. MINIHAN
General, USAF
Commander

LET'S GO!