

In Case Of Emergency

by Nancy Cox Starkey

As many of us travel great distances with our dogs in our vehicles, here's something which you might want to keep in mind. Have you ever stopped to think what might happen if there were an accident in which you were injured (or even killed) and not able to communicate your wishes regarding your dogs? I now carry the following letter, along with photos and medical records for each dog, in my vehicle at all times.

* *

In Case of an Accident

In the event that I, _____, am incapacitated and unable to make my wishes known regarding my dogs, please honor the following requests:

My _____, M _____, is to be contacted as soon as possible at _____ . If he/she can not be reached, please contact my _____, M _____ at _____. All expenses for the dogs care will be guaranteed by them.

If the dogs are not injured, they are to be cared for by the nearest reputable boarding kennel, and kept in the best possible manner, until arrangements can be made to get them home.

If the dogs are injured, they are to be cared for by the nearest reputable veterinarian. I would prefer that my veterinarian, Dr. _____, be contacted regarding decisions about the dog's care and treatment and can be contacted 24 hours a day at the _____ Veterinary Hospital at _____. If any dog is injured beyond all hope of recovery, that dog is to be humanely euthanised by a veterinarian.

Photographs and descriptions of the dogs which usually accompany me are attached, as are their health and vaccination records. These dogs are tattooed/micro-chipped on the _____ and the number(s) are: _____
The welfare of these dogs is my primary consideration.

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Consider keeping a letter such as this (with your information and additional instructions, of course) in your vehicle, somewhere where it would be easily located by emergency personnel (mine is in a zip-locked plastic bag and attached to their crates). It could ensure the proper treatment of your dogs in case of an accident. The alternatives are not pleasant: if uninjured, your dogs could be taken to a local "pound"; if injured, your dogs could be "put out of their misery" by a well-meaning but uninformed trooper. And, hopefully, all of us further ensure our dogs safety by keeping them restrained at all times while traveling (in their crates or in a seat belt system). A few simple precautions could make a big difference in an emergency situation.

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