

MEDIA STATEMENT



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October 25, 2012

NJSPCA and NJVMA: Common Sense, Not New Laws Best for People and Pets in Vehicles

STATEMENT BY:

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After months of confusion and argument over what the law says—or should say—about how New Jerseyans should secure their pets in vehicles, the New Jersey SPCA and New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association issued a joint statement in hopes of setting the record straight.

The State of New Jersey's has **NOT** passed a “new law” requiring animals to be restrained while being transported in a vehicle. In fact, for over fifteen (15) years, New Jersey has had a law on the books called “improper transport” (4:18:22). This law was explained during the event to highlight the fact that the NJSPCA does have the authority to file animal cruelty charges if and when animals are observed being transported in an improper manner.

The State of New Jersey is **NOT** mandating that animal owners run out to their local pet store or go online and purchase an animal harness that integrates into a vehicle seat belt system. While the NJSPCA urges motorists to consider purchasing a harness to keep their animals safe, New Jersey state law does not require these devices.

Furthermore, both the NJSPCA and the NJVMA want to be clear: neither organization has called for, or ever will call for, a law specifically requiring animals to be tethered inside a vehicle. Both organizations, in fact, believe that such an expansion of our existing transportation requirements would be unnecessary. What New Jersey motorists should turn to, the organizations believe, is just some old fashioned common sense when traveling with animals in the car.

Expanding on the joint statement, NJVMA President Dr. Ian Driben said “We’ve had numerous inquiries from clients if they will be targeted for animal cruelty if they don’t restrain their pets in the car. The joint position of the NJVMA and NJSPCA will clarify that owners need to use common sense to insure the safety of their pets, and their own personal safety, when transporting pets.”

NJSPCA President Rick Yocum added, “Summonses and/or warnings can already be issued when motorists are observed transporting animals in such a manner that could cause harm to the animals or others. Animals being transported unrestrained in the back of pick up truck beds, sitting on a drivers lap, or with more than 30% of their bodies protruding out the windows of a vehicle are examples. Motorists should simply take a common sense approach when transporting their animals to protect themselves and their animals should an accident occur.”

Both groups will be taking their message to the legislature, media, and their own membership in a shared effort to clear the air.

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Since 1868, the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been the leading force committed to protecting New Jerseys animals from Cruelty and Neglect. For more information about the NJSPCA, please visit www.njspca.org.

The New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association is the professional association representing New Jersey’s licensed veterinarians and advancing the profession in New Jersey since 1884.