



## Quick Reference Guide to Crate Training

Start your training when you are able to be home with your dog. Always take care to remove collar and tags prior to your dog entering their crate.

1. Allow your dog to explore the crate on her own. You can toss some treats or toys inside and show interest in the crate to encourage her curiosity. Leave the door **OPEN** during the introduction period. **NEVER** use force to put your dog into her crate and **ALWAYS** praise her anytime she enters on her own.
2. Once your dog enters and exits her crate willingly, **CLOSE THE DOOR** for a few seconds or a minute. Remain close to the crate praising her while she is inside. Then, let her out in a calm quiet manner – do not make a big deal out of it. **IMPORTANT:** Do **NOT** release her if she is barking or crying. **WAIT** until she is **SETTLED** to release her.
3. Gradually extend the amount of time your dog spends in the crate. For the first few absences should be less than 30 minutes. Keep your departures and arrivals **LOW KEY**.
4. Continue to crate your dog for a few minutes each day when you are home so that crating does **NOT** always predict that you are leaving. Encouraging your dog to eliminate in the proper place immediately after she is released from her crate will quickly teach her when and where to take care of her business.
5. Within a few attempts over two to three, most dogs will enter the crate willingly and quietly settle down for a nap.

A crate should **NEVER** be overused or used as a form of punishment. A crate will be the most useful to you and your dog if it is regarded as a special retreat area and not as a punishment.



## **Helpful TIPS for NEW Foster Parents**

### **As a new SA ROCKS foster parent, we encourage you to crate your pet.**

The most common misconception about a dog crate is that it is a cruel form of caging a pet. This is completely false, and in fact, a dog will actually find a crate to be a secure and safe sanctuary.

### **Why do Dog Owners Love Crates?**

Next to the training collar and leash, the dog crate is the proven training tool most recommended by professional dog trainers, groomers and veterinarians. Once accustomed to the dog crate, unfavorable behaviors such as house soiling, destructive chewing, digging, unnecessary barking, and howling can be avoided. Crate training is also an ideal system to help ease separation anxiety. Since the dog's habits will be much easier to regulate by using the dog crate, discipline for misbehavior will be less necessary which will allow a stronger dog and owner relationship. Crate-trained dogs travel easier in their "den" since they feel secure.

And, compared to the cost of replacing furniture, plants, carpet, and other personal items that may be destroyed when a dog is allowed to roam a household unsupervised, the expense of a crate is very economical.

### **How Can a Crate be Used to Avoid Accidents?**

Crate training is proven to be the fastest, most cost effective method of instilling "good dog" behavior. A dog's natural instinct is to keep the area in which she rests as clean as possible. Most dogs are very resistant to being near their own waste and therefore will make an extra effort to control their own elimination when confined to a crate. By the owner encouraging elimination in the proper place immediately after a dog is released from the crate, the pet quickly learns when and where to "take care of business." This is a proven method of house training recommended by nationally known trainers.

### **How Can a Crate be Used to Solve Other Behavioral Problems?**

Most behavior problems such as destructive chewing are due to the boredom of an unsupervised dog. If allowed to continue the behavior, it quickly becomes a habit that is difficult to change. Dogs naturally want to please their owners and receive praise and love in return. If the dog knows exactly what is expected of her, she will gladly behave accordingly to benefit from it and be rewarded. By using a crate during the owner's short-term absences, the dog is simply not able to misbehave. Instead she will rest quietly in her crate. Dogs generally sleep 90% of the time the owners are away. It's the other 10% that so many things can go wrong. By crating the dog, you are essentially only asking for a small amount of change to the dog's natural schedule.

### **How Can a Crate be Used to Ease Separation Anxiety?**

Separation anxiety is the number one behavioral problem today. It can be defined as increased fearfulness of the dog after the departure of the owner. This often misunderstood disorder causes loving pet owners to feel they have no other option than to find their dog another home. Dogs are pack animals and are not prepared to cope with isolation. They must be taught how to be alone and reassured that they will not be alone for long. Through positive crate training, the dog's personal den can provide an increased sense of security, which often helps ease stress and stress-related behaviors. Antidepressant medication may curve the behavior but it will not solve the problem.

## **When Can You Start Using a Crate?**

**Immediately!** The sooner the better, no matter what age your dog may be. A dog at any age can be introduced to crate training. Older dogs can view the crate as punishment in the beginning and may need extra encouragement and slower graduated confinement times. Start your training when you are able to be home with your dog.

## **Why a Wire Crate?**

A wire crate is recommended to allow your dog optimum visibility of her surroundings. Your dog will be most relaxed if she is sheltered but still able to view her surroundings without having to get up. She will rest longer and quieter. Wire crates are designed for proper ventilation. Illness can be caused during house breaking if puppies or dogs are forced to inhale urine odors. Wire crates are easy to move and store, and can be cleaned with soap and water. With proper care, a wire crate will last the life of the dog.

## **What Size of Crate Does Your Dog Need?**

When selecting a crate for a dog, go ahead and get one that will fit the dog's need when she is fully-grown. The dog should be able to comfortably walk in, turn around and lay down in the crate. Your pet should not feel cramped, but do not use a crate that is too big, that will defeat the purpose of giving the dog the sense of having his own enclosed "den." An oversized crate will also defeat the dog's natural instinct to keep her home clean and free of waste since she may use one end to rest and one end to "go."

## **Where Should the Crate be Located?**

The crate should be placed in an area that is easy to supervise. Since dogs are highly social animals the crate should be in an area of the household where the family spends most of their time. The crate should not be put in an isolated area. At night, the bedroom is an ideal place for a crate so that the dog can feel the security of being near her owner. Dog owners that are familiar with crate training and its benefits to both people and pets often have two or more crates set up in the house. (For example, one in the den and one in the bedroom.) Wherever the crate is placed, it is important that it not be in a draft or direct heat. Some dogs feel more secure when a towel or blanket is draped over the top and sides of the crate.

It is especially important to keep the crate in the bedroom at night while puppies are being housetrained. For successful housetraining, you must be able to hear your puppy cry when she needs to be let outside to eliminate. It is also important to regulate a puppy's feeding schedule so that this can be taken into consideration as to when and how often she must be allowed to relieve herself. The last meal of the day should come at least two hours before bedtime. It is important to establish a timely routine so that the dog's body functions can adjust to when she will be released from the crate. As a dog gets older the amount of time she can stay in the crate can be extended but should never exceed more than six to eight hours.