

Air Canada to Ban Cats from Cabins

Cats and other pets will only be allowed in cargo holds on domestic flights.

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As of Sept. 18, Air Canada will institute a ban disallowing cats and other pets from traveling in passenger cabins on domestic flights.

According to Air Canada spokesman Peter Fitzpatrick, the airline made the decision to “protect the health and safety of its travelers.” The decision was partly prompted by complaints filed with the Canadian Transportation Agency from people who are allergic to animals, Fitzpatrick said.

Guide dogs are the sole exception to the ban and will continue to be allowed.

Humane Society of Canada executive director Michael O’Sullivan and other animal rights activists have called the airline’s ban unreasonable because allergic reactions to animals are unlikely unless a person has direct contact with an animal.

In Canada, like the United States, individual airlines are allowed to set their own policy regarding cats and pets traveling in airplane passenger cabins.

Although a cat and pet ban in cabins on domestic flights is just now being imposed, animals haven’t been allowed in cabins on Air Canada’s international flights for several years.

Air Canada’s biggest competitor, WestJet Airlines, continues to allow pets in airplane cabins on domestic flights. Travelers are allowed to bring cats, dogs, birds and rabbits in leak-proof kennels that fit under the seat.