



CarGurus Study Finds Dogs Are More Relaxed in Electric Cars

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Study conducted by U.K.-based University of Lincoln and CarGurus investigates the impact of electric vehicle travel on dog behavior and well-being

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Nov. 30, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [CarGurus](#) (Nasdaq: CARG), the No. 1 visited digital auto platform for shopping, buying, and selling new and used vehicles¹, today released a first-of-its-kind study examining the well-being of dogs in electric vehicles (EVs). Conducted in collaboration with the University of Lincoln in the United Kingdom, the study finds dogs are more relaxed in EVs than in diesel-powered cars.

The CarGurus Dogs and EVs Study, which has been submitted for publication in an international scientific journal, was commissioned to investigate the effects of traveling in EVs on dog behavior and welfare.

CarGurus and the University of Lincoln conducted the two-day study using 20 dogs. Each dog was taken on two 10-minute journeys, one in an EV followed by the same route in a diesel-powered vehicle, before a range of scientific observations and biometric measurements analyzed the dog's response.

Led by Dr. Daniel Mills, Professor of Veterinary Behavioral Medicine at the University of Lincoln, the study found that dogs were less settled in diesel-powered cars compared with EVs. Additionally, dogs that showed some signs of car sickness had notably reduced symptoms in an EV.

"We know most dogs will travel in a car at some point in their life, if not on a daily basis. Yet as EVs become more prevalent with drivers, there have been no studies of their effect on dogs until now," said Dr. Mills. "Our results clearly show that dogs seem to be more relaxed in EVs, particularly when looking at behavioral traits such as restlessness. Additionally, an interesting and somewhat unintended revelation from the study came from the dogs we identified as having potential symptoms associated with travel sickness."

The findings in detail

The study concluded that there was no evidence to suggest EVs have a detrimental effect on a dog's well-being. This resolves anecdotal concerns that the differences in vibration and/or noise experienced in an EV may cause dogs to be unsettled or have increased car sickness.

"We know from previous studies that the sharp increase in dog ownership over the past three years has prompted many drivers to rethink what car best suits their needs," said Chris Knapman, editor at CarGurus. "To date, our advice has focused on safety and practicality, and these remain the primary considerations. However, for those weighing the switch to an electric car, this study will provide reassurance that it will suit their dog equally as well."

While the dogs in the study lay for about a third of the drive time regardless of powertrain, in diesel cars, dogs broke their laying position on average 50% more than when in an EV. The study finds this is likely the result of differences in noise and/or vibration in the two types of cars.

Findings also indicated that a small number of dogs appeared to feel markedly less nauseous in an EV compared to a car with an internal combustion engine (ICE). This was demonstrated by changes in behavior and a reduction in heart rate by up to 30% when traveling in an EV.

The study also uncovered that many dogs seemed to enjoy the motion of cars. With a higher heart rate linked to motion sickness, data revealed that heart rates in two-thirds (66%) of the dogs went down as a result of travel in both ICE vehicles and EVs.

CarGurus carried out further research with dog owners regarding their pet's behaviors when traveling.

Overall, owners said their pets most commonly suffered from over-excitement (58%), anxiety (48%), and nausea (44%) when traveling in the car. However, the participants that have driven their dogs in both an ICE and EV vehicle said they settled better (39%), were calmer (43%), less anxious (42%), and whined less (45%) in an EV compared to an ICE.

Lastly, the research also looked at how dog owners try to keep their pets relaxed in the car. Nearly half (47%) give treats to encourage them to get in the car, 46% put a toy or blanket in the car, 36% go on drives in the car to get them used to traveling, and 36% play relaxing music.

Top tips to keep dogs relaxed when traveling, according to Dr. Daniel Mills, Professor of Veterinary Behavioural Medicine, University of Lincoln:

1. For your safety when traveling in the car, your dog should be restrained. There are different types of restraining methods available, such as carriers, leashes, or comfortable harnesses that attach to car seat belts. All of them allow the dog to sit or lie down.
2. For some dogs, restriction of vision can reduce excitement. Restraining them below window level can help impede their vision of traffic lights, people, dogs, or simply the blur of objects passing by.
3. Owners should take their dogs to a range of places so the outcome of the car ride is not predictable. For example, if you take them on the same route for a regular walk, they can become overexcited about the prospect of the walk, which may create problematic behavior that distracts the driver.
4. Ignore boisterous behavior. Don't punish your dog when it is acting up, it is only likely to make matters worse and increase any stress.
5. If your dog is stressed or fearful, don't try to reassure them, as this can actually make things worse. Rather, ask them to settle, then reward the calm behavior. It is better to provide a dog with some form of distraction, like a chew toy, in advance.
6. Reward appropriate behavior in the car with treats or soothing, calm praise.
7. Medication for car sickness or stress/anxiety when traveling may be helpful in some cases, but should only be used under veterinary supervision.
8. Use a calming pheromone such as Adaptil™ to help settle the dog.

[See here](#) for more details about the study. For more tips about dogs in cars, [see here](#).

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¹ [Similarweb](#): Overview Report (Traffic Insights), Q3 2022, U.S.

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