BOAS Assessment Program Guidelines

Effective as of: May 14, 2024

International Pet and Animal Transportation Association

General

- It is important that any snub-nosed animal being presented to a veterinarian for the BOAS Fit to Fly assessment be transported by the Pet Shipper to the veterinarian. The owner should not be present. This ensures that no influence can be applied by the pet owner to the veterinarian regarding the outcome of the examination.
- The validity of the BOAS Fit to Fly will vary by airline. The condition itself does not change rapidly, however, an animal's fitness to fly related to BOAS can change over time. Decreasing body condition, BOAS surgery, etc can improve some individuals' fitness to fly, and conditions like heart disease can cause it to worsen.
- The goal of this program is not to ship more brachycephalic animals. It is to prevent the transport of individuals that are not safe to travel and allow those that are to be able to travel. A secondary goal later in time may be to identify those breeds that have little to no risk of BOAS and to remove them from the list of breeds restricted to fly.
- This is a very powerful program to increase the welfare of brachycephalic pets. It is, however, only as strong as its weakest link. If a pet is erroneously graded as fit to fly and then has an incident related to its BOAS, the program may fail resulting in no brachycephalic animals being allowed to fly. The ability to fly these animals is completely voluntary by the airlines and can be revoked at any time.

High Risk Breeds

- The following brachycephalic dog breeds are considered high-risk breeds due to the higher incidence of severe grades of BOAS compared to other brachycephalic breed: French and English Bulldog, all Pugs, and Boston Terriers.
- It is highly recommended that the high-risk breeds be subjected to the IPATA Fit to Fly Assessment irrespective of whether this assessment is required by the airline for acceptance.
- Please note that it is planned that this document will be upgraded from highly recommended to mandatory in the future.
- It is also recommended to do this assessment at the beginning of preparation of the pet to travel. This will assure that a multi-month process to prepare to go to a demanding location won't result in failure after other time consuming and expensive preparation has been completed. This may mean doing this assessment again within the timeframe required by the airline.

Veterinarians

- Encourage your veterinarian to obtain the certification for this program. Explain the benefits of reducing the number of high-risk pets that will fly and encourage them to fail dogs if they don't pass the criteria of the program.
- Expect your veterinarian to charge an additional fee for this exam as it takes time and expertise. This will also help to offset the liability of assessing these animals.
- It is ok for more than one pet shipper to use the same veterinarian; however, encouraging multiple veterinarians in high population areas will benefit the shippers in the area increasing the availability of Fit to Fly assessment at any given time.

This policy is subject to change as the IPATA BOAS Program is further implemented but the IPATA CODE OF ETHICS will remain the same. All IPATA MEMBERS will be notified when future changes to this document are made.

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