

Convention is approaching and the question is how to do I prepare to fly my rabbit and cavies. The ARBA Airline Committee has been working this past year with a subcommittee of IATA with adding the containers we commonly used to transport our animals. This is still an ongoing process and it will not be decided on prior to this convention. What does this mean for transporting to Indianapolis? It means we are still at the mercy of your LOCAL airports.

DO NOT believe what you are told when you make your reservations at the 1-800 number of the airlines. We would recommend you go to your local airport and find out what they are requiring you to do to your containers to fly to Indianapolis. This may be different from what you flew in last year, last month, last week, or even yesterday. Honestly we are at their mercy each and every day at this point. A test run of your containers if you have the time, would not be a bad idea to your local airport and have someone in the area where you will be shipping look over your containers. By doing a test run you will know where is the location, how long it takes to get to the location, and ask if they know who will be on duty the day your containers be flying out. If they know can they look at them now and anything else specifically they are requiring that morning you will be flying animals that will expedite your process. You can also call Indianapolis directly if you have specific questions once you know your specific airlines. I would ask for the number from the local airline when you make the visit to the local airport otherwise all you will get many times is the 1-800 number. Lastly at your local airport, ask if they are willing to sign off on your containers. That way if Mr. Smith says yes, they look great but Mr. Smith isn't there the morning you fly and Mrs. Jones has a problem you not only have Mr. Smith's name but you have a paper stating they examined them on xyz date and they approved them for flying on whatever day you are going to fly. Also have a line for they recommend you change the following so they can write in what they want you to change so you can make those changes and you can show who ever when you check in that they wanted you to change what ever and you did that. Not sure if they will sign off but it is worth the try. If they will not sign a sign off sheet at least get the date, time, person's name and title of that person, and phone number if they will give it to you that looked over your container. Hold on to this and take it to Indianapolis for your return trip too. This kind of information is helpful in case you have a problem boarding on that end. It has worked in the past were airlines have given breeders problems with a container and if you have an employee's name and phone number that examined the container on the other end it usually will get it on the plane to get it home as they want to get you home.

It helps to seem like you know what you are doing but do not be pushy but helpful. If you do have questions, ask politely of the agents. Please remember we are still in negotiations on our containers with the airlines and we would like to show them we are polite people they would like to work with and continue to fly rabbits and cavies. Airlines DO NOT have to fly us. They choose to fly animals and more and more airlines are choosing not to fly animals. We want to work with the airlines that have still been flying rabbits and cavies and so far they really do want to work with us.

Questions have come our way about the flight information that is in the show catalog. The ARBA airline committee did not compose information within the catalog. If you do have airline questions though we are always more than willing to answer a question. We are aware there are airlines listed in the catalog that no longer fly rabbits and cavies and wrong pricing information. Our suggestions is to call the airlines and do price comparisons. At this time the ARBA does not have a "contract" with any airline for a preferred rate. We hope to do preferred rates in the future once we have approved carriers.

Lastly in light of the weather situation that has been happening in our nation. Double check your flight and all the connections. It is possible airlines may get backed up due to these weather situations. I have been in touch with one airlines prior to hurricane Irma and was told they were about 90percent back to speed from the hurricane Harvey. Don't wait for the airlines to notify you of problems stay on top of your flight and all of its connections. We hope everyone has a pleasant time arriving to Indianapolis for the 94th ARBA Convention where Victory Awaits!

Pat Vezino- ARBA Airline Committee Chairperson