Questions to Ask of Pet Transportation Services

1. Is the transporter USDA registered?
    a. If so, what is the registration number? Verify the number is valid and current.
2. Is the transporter bonded?
    a. If so, for how much? Who are they bonded? What is the policy number? Don't be afraid to ask for a copy of the bond.
3. Do they have a valid driver's license?
    a. If so, what state are they licensed in and what is the license number? Get a copy of the license if possible.
4. Will your pet be in a carrier for its safety?
    a. If the pet is in a carrier, how is it secured inside the vehicle?
    b. Do you have to provide the carrier, or will they provide the carrier?
    c. Does your pet have to share a carrier with another animal?
5. Do they sedate any animals? Or give Benadryl?
6. Will your pet have a bowl to drink water from? Or do they use a water lixit? (A lixit, is a device used for watering pets. The pet must be trained to lick a stem inserted into a bottle to get water.)
7. Will they feed your pet its dog food during the trip or do they use their own brand of food?
    a. Do they stop for food and water breaks for your pet or must the pet eat and drink while in motion?
8. Do they monitor the amount of food and water intake of the pet during transportation?
    a. If so, do they keep a log of the pet's intake and output? Do they log all rest and potty breaks?
9. Is there anyone on board that is trained to recognize hypoglycemia and knows how to treat or prevent this?
10. Is the seller/shipper allowed to send any treats, toys, paperwork or other items along with the pet?
11. What kind of vehicle do they use for transporting the pet?
    a. Get the tag number, year, make, model and color. When meeting the transportation vehicle, take a picture of the person and the vehicle. Don't be shy about the transporter seeing you do this. Tell them you are texting or emailing the photo to the buyer/receiver. Also tell the buyer/receiver the estimated time of arrival.
12. How do they regulate the temperature in the vehicle that is transporting the pet, while in motion and when stopped?
13. What precautions do they take if the weather is extremely hot or cold?
14. Do they have a generator and/or a secondary air conditioner/heater?
15. What is the full name, date of birth, history and record of the person(s) who will be driving your pet?
    a. If they will not give this information, get the person's USDA registration number and then check their criminal record and history.
16. Do they have more than one driver on board the transport vehicle?
    a. Who is the back-up driver? What is their information? Do a background check on all drivers.
17. Is the transportation driver or anyone on board trained as a veterinarian technician or in basic dog CPR?
18. Will your pet change vehicles during the trip?
    a. If there is a vehicle change, why will it change vehicles and where will the change happen? Ask for the complete information for the new driver and the details of the new vehicle.
19. Do they own the vehicle the pet is being transported in or is it being rented?
    a. If the vehicle is being rented, whose name is it rented in and what company is the vehicle rented from?
20. When and what routine maintenance was last performed on the transportation vehicle?
21. Will the pet be left unattended inside the vehicle when the transporter stops for a break or while fueling the vehicle?
    a. If they are a single driver, do they leave the vehicle locked and running with the pet inside?
    b. If they have two drivers, will one person always be with the vehicle?
22. Do they have a hot dog alert system on board? This type of system will notify the transporter by text or email, if the vehicle is getting too hot or cold should they be away from the vehicle.
23. What happens to your pet if there is an accident, vehicle break down, or a transportation delay?
24. Do they keep a transportation log and contact numbers for the shippers/sellers/buyers/receivers and pets on board and at a secondary location?
25. How is each pet identified?
26. How can you get in touch with the driver during transportation?
27. Who can you contact if the driver can't be reached?
28. Will the transportation vehicle will be on the road more than 7 to 10 hours at a time?
29. What do the drivers do if they get sleepy? Or need to stop overnight?
    a. Does the driver have planned sleep breaks along the route?
    b. If the driver stops overnight, do they get a hotel room?
        i. If they get a hotel room, where will your pet sleep?
    c. Do the driver(s) sleep in the vehicle?
        i. If they sleep in the vehicle, how do they choose a safe spot to stop and when do they stop?
30. Do the drivers use public rest areas or dog parks to walk your pet during cleaning and relief times?
31. Will your pet be allowed out of the vehicle for potty or exercise breaks?
    a. Does the transporter take precautions such as entering the vehicle and shutting the vehicle door before opening the carrier?
    b. Does the transporter use a special collar or leash while walking pets to prevent escape?
    c. Does the transporter tie or stake out dogs during cleaning or potty breaks?
    d. Are exercise pens used during potty stops? If so, do they have lids on them to prevent escape?
32. What recovery steps will be taken if a pet should escape during transportation?
33. Does the transporter have a route mapped out with hotel, rest stops and veterinarian locations?
34. Does the transport vehicle have a tracking device on board?
    a. If there is a tracking device, can it be accessed by the seller/shipper and/or buyer/receiver?
35. Does the transporter require pets to be microchipped prior to transportation?
36. Will the seller/shipper be notified when the pet has been delivered?
37. Do the transporters offer photographic and/or telephonic updates along the route?
38. How long have they been transporting dogs?
39. Can they give at least three verifiable professional references?
40. Google maps and images are great tools that will help you learn more about your transporter; use them prior to shipping a pet.