

Are Pets Muktzeh On Shabbos and Yom Tov?

The Talmud states that it is forbidden to move animals on Shabbos. In Halachic terms, animals are considered like sticks and stones which have no permissible Shabbos use and are muktzeh machmas gufo, severe muktzeh, which may not be moved for any reason. This ruling is quoted by the Shulchan Aruch and most of the later poskim and no distinction is drawn between farm animals and households pets; all are considered severe muktzeh. Some poskim expressly include "playful animals" in this prohibition.

There are, however, other poskim who do distinguish between farm animals and household pets. In their opinion, a pet is considered like a household item, similar to a toy or a picture, and is not classified as muktzeh at all. While it is advisable to follow the majority opinion and not carry or move pets on Shabbos, those who are lenient have a halachic authority upon whom to rely. Certainly, if the pet is in distress, one may be lenient and move it or carry it.

All opinions agree that it is permitted to touch (without moving) or feed one's pets on Shabbos.

It is also permitted to hold onto a leash and walk a dog in an area which is enclosed by an eiruv. It is permitted to place a leash on a dog on Shabbos. (*Rabbi Daniel Neustadt, torah.org. For final rulings, consult your Rav.*)