

Does your pet have shotgun status?

Lorna Doone and all of her adorable (but very hairy) "doggieness" was once relegated to the WAY back of my car. All I had to do was open my hatchback and give the command "load up" and she would eagerly leap in, ready for our next automobile adventure.



Lorna's days in the way back are numbered.

Fast forward a few years and now when I open the hatch she just sits down and stares at me until I hoist her in there myself. "Forget the way back," she seems to say with her doleful brown eyes. "I've got my eye on those cushy leather seats where I belong."

I'm not sure if The Doone's new attitude is a product of age and general creakiness or because she's witnessed one too many dogs sitting shotgun in passing cars. All I know is that a few weeks ago when I finally gave in and let her sprawl out on the back seat, she shot me a glance that clearly telegraphed a message: her days in the way back were numbered.

According to a recent Ford Motor Company survey of 2,232 adults, I'm not the only softie out there and, as a result, more and more dogs are claiming shotgun status. Nearly 90% of dog owners regularly invite their dogs to ride with them and over half (56%) of them said that they are more likely to grant their pooch shotgun status than to send them to the back of the bus. (Read about the hazard airbags can present to pets [here](#).) Some pet owners even went so far as to say they sometimes give their canines precedence over their human passengers.

The survey also revealed that 19% have allowed their dog to ride on their lap while they're driving — definitely not the safest move!

As a result of The Doone's elevated position as a more "legitimate" passenger, she now has her very own [Roadie Harness](#) (about \$45) that works with the seat belts in my car and keeps her safe in the event of an accident, but still gives her free range of the back seat. (It works well with her regular leashes too.) I am also awaiting the arrival of my new semi-custom [Canine Cover](#) (about \$200) so that the Doone can have a comfy ride without drilling tiny holes into my car's upholstery.