

IS YOUR PET LOST?

Have you ever wanted a quick reference to what to do if your pet is lost, this is the article you'd been waiting for. Veterinarians are bombarded every month with notices of lost pets. You can be sure your lost notice is "special" if you'll follow some simple steps. You also need to know who to call if your pet comes up missing. The way to do this is listed in the steps below.

1. Be sure your pet has a tag with your name, address, and phone number on it. These are easy to obtain from a number of sources. Your vet's waiting room probably has order forms to get these made for you. A rabies tag with a number will work, but it might not if your pet is lost on a weekend or holiday. If your pet doesn't wear tags for some reason, you can get collars with your name and phone number stitched right into the fabric. It's your pet's fastest ticket home.
2. Place sign at the entrance and exit points to the neighborhood the pet was lost in. Give a full description of the pet with your phone number. Don't give the pet's name or put the amount of the reward if it is offered. Make the sign simple... the only important things are "LOST CAT" or "LOST DOG"... and your phone number. Make these the largest wording so someone just driving by will see it well. Don't add "tricks" like "child's pet" or "needs medication"... this will only clutter up the important points of the sign.
3. Make a poster with your pet's information. Preferably with a picture and a "tear-off" of your phone numbers. Deliver these to area animal clinics, shelters, and pounds. Deliver them INSTEAD of mailing them. Also stop by these places again if you've not found your pet after one week.
4. Place a lost and found ad in the local newspaper. Our town will allow you to place these ads free of charge.
5. Go up to the animal shelter or pound every day to visually see if your pet was brought in. Don't rely on an employee recognizing your pet by picture or description. They often have multiple employees that work several shifts. You must see for yourself. Plus, the more you visit there, the more the people there will get to know you and offer their help to you. The "dog catcher" is looking for animals everyday...and doesn't "get" them all. That officer might report a sighting of your pet during his daily rounds. Make a point to meet these people yourself. My personal opinion is that micro-chips installed in your pet are only helpful in identifying an animal as YOUR pet... they do very little to help you recover a lost pet, as most veterinarians and animal shelters don't bother to scan lost pets.

Remember that you should always make certain your yard is secure enough to keep your pet inside it. Check closely for loose boards, and bent wires that might allow your pet an escape route. Make sure gates stay closed and latched...and even locked. Be sure the fence is high enough to keep a pet from jumping over it. Remember that cats are impossible to confine, and you always take a chance on your cat disappearing or getting injured when they are allowed outside. It's always best to prevent your pet's escape before it happens.

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