

LOST YOUR DOG OR CAT?

TIPS ON HOW TO FIND YOUR LOST ANIMAL

The following are crucial steps to increase your chances of finding your lost animal. The more determination you have in finding your animal, the better chance you have. Do not give up! Follow all of these steps. These tips have helped reunite people and animals even months after their animal was lost.

1. Hang posters within at least a mile of every direction of your house. The largest words on the poster should be “LOST CAT” or “LOST DOG” and “REWARD”. Having a picture on the poster really helps as well because most people do not know the difference between different types of cats and dogs. Hang these posters in grocery stores, on stop signs, telephone poles, neighbors’ doors, etc. Hang these posters right away and in places that they can easily be seen...your chances of finding your animal are greater right after your animal is lost.
2. Go to the animal shelters at least every 3 days but ideally every day. The shelters are too busy to remember you or your cat or dog...do not depend on them to call you. Walk through the cat and dog area at each shelter and look for your animal. Remember that many shelters will only hold your animal 5 days before the animal is killed. This is why it is crucial to check at least every 3 days. Be sure to leave one of your LOST posters at the shelter.
3. Post a “lost” posting on www.Craigslist.com, www.petfinder.com, www.fidofinder.com, www.lostfoundpets.com, www.dogdetective.com and www.1800saveapet.com. Also, go through all the “found” postings on all of these sites.
4. Search your neighborhood both day and night. Your cat may be too scared to come to you during the day so be sure to go out at night as well. If your cat or dog has a favorite treat that he or she comes running to when you shake the can or bag, use this sound while you are searching. Use a flashlight and look under porches and bushes. For dogs walk through your neighborhood calling for your dog. Be sure to ask everyone you pass especially mail carriers and delivery people.
5. Leave a bowl of water and food on your porch. Only put a small amount of food each day to determine if it is disappearing. This is especially important for cats. Cats who are neutered/spayed (which we hope your cat is!) will not roam. Cats typically stick very close to where they live as long as food and water are available. Most people who lose their cats find them within a few blocks of their home.
6. Go house to house and ask neighbors if they have seen your cat or dog. Ask them to check their garage in case your animal ran in and got trapped.
7. Dogs: If you believe that your dog has been home, but hasn’t stuck around, consider borrowing a humane dog trap from a rescue group. You will need specific instructions from the rescue group about how to use the trap. Any wild animal or other animal that is not your dog must be released immediately, by law. Cats: Set a humane trap on your front porch with mackerel and newspaper inside of it. Always check the trap at least every hour even through the night. If you trap a different cat or a wild animal, just carefully open the trap and they will run out. You can not keep a wild animal or a cat who does not belong to you. You are required to immediately release them. These humane traps are available from rescue groups such as straycatalliance.org or your local shelter. Only leave the trap on your porch if you live in a neighborhood where your front porch is protected and safe. If

your front porch is not protected set the trap close to your door but in a hidden place and watch it at all times.

8. Optional: Put baking flour on your front porch to determine if your cat or dog is coming on the porch. Cat and dog footprints are different than a raccoon.
9. If you recently moved into your home or recently adopted an animal, go look at their previous home and hang signs there as well. Cats and dogs have been known to travel back to their original home after moving if it has been less than 30 days.
10. Contact all local rescue groups (names and contact info available by putting in your zip code at www.1800saveapet.com) and give them a description of your animal. Sometimes people find lost animals and turn them into rescue groups instead of the shelter.
11. Put an ad in your local paper and scan all the Lost/Found sections of the paper. Most papers will post FOUND ads for free.

The most important thing to do is NOT give up. Do not just try for a few days and think your animal is gone and there is no chance of finding him/her again. People have found their animals MONTHS after they were lost. The only chance your lost animal has is you! Keep looking for them until they are safe. Be sure to leave food and water on your porch continually until you find your cat or dog. Your animal may be hiding and only coming out at night to eat (more common with cats than dogs).

Once you get your animal back be sure to fix the fence or window where he/she got out. Keep your cat strictly indoors. Indoor cats are much safer and live longer than cats who go outside. Cats and dogs who go outside risk being killed by cars, dogs, coyotes, poison, etc. Keep your cat inside and your dog in a secure yard or indoors. Put a collar on both dogs and cats with an ID tag. This will help people get your animal back to you quickly. Also, Be sure to microchip your cat and dog in case a collar comes off because all shelters will scan for chips when cats/dogs arrive at the shelter. This will assure if your animal ends up in the shelter you will be notified. Of course, do not depend on this...always check the shelters yourself.

Now...go find your animal!