

# Have You Lost or Found a Pet?

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As soon as you notice your pet is gone, start the search process.

Your frightened pet may hide from people, run away if he sees a person, he may even run away from you. Call your pet's name, and talk in normal tones. The best time to call for your pet is at night, and at dawn. When searching, bring his favorite food treat or squeaky toy.

Spread the word! While you are walking in your neighborhood, stop and speak with every person you encounter –the more people that know about your lost pet, the more likely the one person who spots him will call you. Check with children in your neighborhood – they are great resources.

Post a Lost Dog notice in Facebook groups and local web boards.

Make posters and fliers. Keep it simple: "LOST DOG (or cat)!" Info should include: a recent photograph, where [ not your address ] and when [date] the dog was last seen, phone number and "Reward! " .

Visit and distribute fliers to all your neighbors, veterinary clinics, animal shelters, grooming places, large stores with bulletin boards like El Torito, SuperLake and Walmart and pet supply stores in your area. Post a lost dog notice on local web boards.

Give stacks of flyers to friends and family and have them go door to door. Give the flyers to local people like the gas delivery man, the garbage pick-up men, water delivery men, and anyone else you know who gets around the neighborhood in their daily routines.

On an on-going basis check local web boards to see if anyone has posted a notice that they have found a dog that possibly matches yours. Your messages may have crossed paths.

Keep visiting your local shelters with current pictures of your dog. You might find someone you haven't talked to before with information. Also, check where you posted your flyers to make sure they're still there and haven't been covered over.

## Prevent & Prepare For A Lost Pet

- ✓ Have a recent close-up and full body picture of your pet.
- ✓ Make sure your pet is wearing a collar with an I.D. tag with your current phone number.
- ✓ Pet-proof your yard fence so your cat or dog will be safely confined.
- ✓ Keep fence gates securely locked.
- ✓ Never allow your pets to roam free in the neighborhood.
- ✓ Always transport your cat in a carrier and your dog on leash or in a carrier.
- ✓ Spay/neuter your pets. Both males and females will be much less likely to wander if they are "fixed".





Safety First. You need to keep in mind if you see a stray dog: the safety of the dog, your own safety, and the safety of others. A frightened and possibly sick or injured dog may behave unpredictably. When approaching the dog, speak calmly and reassuringly to him.

Do an assessment – is this a street dog that does not need rescuing ? [ is not lost ] OR, is this a dog in crisis that needs an intervention?

A dog's appearance can be deceptive. So for the sake of a potential happy reunion, never assume that the dog you found was dumped, abandoned, or homeless until you have concrete evidence or until all efforts to find an owner /guardian has failed. Assume, no matter how the dog behaves or what it looks like, that this dog is owned and loved by someone who wants the dog back.

Check the dog for ID tags . IF it has a tag, call the number. If no collar / tag begin the search for the possible owner.

If the dog is injured:

- Handle the dog very carefully! Even a well trained and highly socialized dog can become aggressive when injured.
- Take the dog to a Vet if possible. If not, call a local Vet who might be willing to make a house call.
- Make sure that the vet knows that this is not your dog and that you have rescued it.
- However in your rescuing this dog you need to be prepared to pay the Vet bills, as it is not the Vet's responsibility to provide free vet care for stray animals.

Try to see if the dog can find it's home again. As you walk in the neighborhood if you see people, ask them if they know this dog or who owns this dog. Check with the local children in the neighborhood – they are great resources. See if the dog understands English or Spanish, – that might give you a clue as to it's owner. Say a few words in English and Spanish, and see if there is a more positive reaction to one language more than the other.

Take a photo of the dog. Post a Found Dog notice in Facebook groups and local web boards.

Make posters and fliers. Keep it simple: " FOUND DOG (or cat)!" Info should include: a photograph, where [ street / area ] and when [date] the dog was found and a phone

number for owner to call. Take photo fliers and distribute fliers to people in the area where the dog was found, veterinary clinics, all animal shelters, grooming places, large stores with bulletin boards like El Torito, SuperLake and Walmart and pet supply stores in your area. Post a giant FOUND DOG poster near the exact spot where you found the dog and a couple more at major intersections in that area. Check the area for any "LOST DOG" posters, but understand that the dog might have traveled quite far and the posters could be one mile away or more. Also consider that the dog may have escaped in the last few hours and the lost posters haven't gone up yet. Maybe the dog's owner is disabled and unable to create and hang posters. Just because there is no poster, don't automatically assume that there is no owner! Chances are there is an owner who desperately wants his or her companion home.

Be sure to check back in the area and within a one-mile radius for "LOST DOG" posters for several days after you have found the dog. Different circumstances (health problems, being out of town, etc.) can prevent people from posting lost pet flyers immediately.

Check the "lost & found" ads in the local paper, and place a "found dog" ad yourself. Remember to check the "lost" ads periodically . Even if the description given doesn't perfectly fit the dog you've found, call anyway. You'd be surprised how many pet owners, shelter workers, and individuals who find lost pets and place "found" dog ads get the breed wrong!

If someone calls in response to your lost dog posting, make the caller give you a full description of the lost pet. Make arrangements to meet in a public place [ not your house ] for the "owner" to meet you or have another person with you for this meeting.

When you take this stray animal home, keep the new animal separated from your family pets. You have no way of knowing if a strange dog or cat has been vaccinated, is ill, or if it might be aggressive toward other pets.

Take care of the animal's physical needs. Offer it water and a little food. If it seems thin or hungry, try not to feed it too much at once. If you have not been successful in finding the dog's owner, help the animal find a new home. If you've bonded with the pet and you're able to take care of it, great! Otherwise, you'll have to find someone willing to adopt it. Do not automatically assume that your local shelter has any vacancies.

After you have done a thorough search for the owner and have been unsuccessful, this is when you should start with your local shelter to see IF they have any room, and when an open vacancy might be available. If and when the shelter has an opening and can accept this animal, it is strongly suggested that you make a donation to help pay for the cost of food and daily care of this animal until a home is found for it.

Meanwhile, you will need to be prepared to provide care for this animal until shelter space is available. During your time of caring for this animal, it is advisable to have the dog seen by a Vet and start its vaccinations and possibly schedule spay-neuter surgery.