

Your Dog Goes Missing

This article, serves as a guide to all dog-owners that wish not to experience the agony and distress of having to deal with the fact that their dog is gone missing. Just read carefully the tips that follow, keeping in mind that your best friend needs an owner who is capable of being proactive as well as encouraging it to catch, fetch, pull, tag and chew. The most important thing to remember is that if your dog gets lost, chances are that someone, somewhere, has seen it. Do not get discouraged and do not panic. Be aware and it is likely that you will be reunited with your beloved companion again, if you follow the instructions listed below and keep yourself organized and prepared at all times.

- Keep an action checklist in a visible location, along with the current phone numbers of emergency contacts, like individuals and organizations you will need to call in case of an emergency. Also keep a copy in your vehicle for when you are traveling.
- Of extreme importance is to keep with this list of contacts a current local street map. It can greatly assist your search in case you need to coordinate a search unit.
- Check frequently your dog to see that he wears his collar. Have a tag attached to the collar with the dog's name and your current home and/or cell phone number. Additionally, always have a current rabies tag and pet license tag attached to your dog's collar. You can find it again sooner by using the engraved tag numbers.
- However, dogs can loose their collars on the streets. For real security, consider putting a microchip implant to your dog and register the chip's number with one of the available registries of your area. If your dog gets stolen or lost and gets dumped or found it can be identified through its microchip ID number. Permanent identification, either that is in the form of a microchip or tattoo, is also useful in case you ever have to prove to law that this dog is indeed yours and you are the one they should return it to.
- Prior to having to deal with any unfortunate event, register your dog to the available services of your area. In most cases registration can be completed online and you will save precious time if something actually happens.
- Ensure you have recent and reliable color photos of your dog that show clearly all your dogs' characteristics, so that you can make a big publicity fuss and make it extremely difficult for thieves to try to keep your dog. Taking pictures annually (maybe something to do on the dog's birthday), is a must. You need to photograph your dog's head and body from different angles (top, front, head shot, side-on, standing, etc.). Focus especially on any special markings your dog might carry.
- Write a simple and clear description of your dog and have it stored in computer's memory-along with the most recent set of photographs-in order to create posters/flyers and publish its disappearance.
- Search in advance and save the webpages of your local animal control authorities for immediate retrieval. This can assist you to immediately publicize its disappearance online through the multiple online services.
- Maintain your garden fence to keep it dog-proof and check frequently the locks on your doors and windows in order to be sure that your dog is safely confined when you leave it alone in the house.
- Guard your dog in your garden and runs. Never allow your dog to roam free in an unfamiliar neighborhood. Leash it at all times. If a dog gets loose in an unfamiliar area its chances of ever finding its way home are particularly small.
- Do not leave your dog tied up outside shops, gyms, classrooms, offices, etc., and do not leave your dog unattended inside your vehicle.
- Be wary of strangers expressing an interest in your dog. Watch out for suspicious characters. You do not have to become overprotective, but at least you have to be aware of the risks. Remember that your dog is your responsibility. Do not leave it to be taken care from friendly strangers.
- If you think you are being followed, do not go straight back home. Try visiting a friend's or neighbor's house, who does not own a dog. Stay at your friend's or neighbor's house for at least half an hour so as to give to the stalker the impression that the house you entered is where the dog actually lives.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

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