

LOST DOG !!!

A family member or visitor to your home leaves the yard gate or door open and suddenly - your dog is missing. This can be a terrifying experience for all concerned and a dangerous one for the dog since he is now on his own in unfamiliar territory and subject to hazards such as traffic. When accidents like this happen, you can improve the chances of getting your dog back safe and sound if you are prepared ahead of time and know how to act, and act quickly. The following information is provided so you can be prepared ahead of time should your dog escape the safety of his home or yard. Keep an action checklist in a visible location, along with current phone numbers for emergency contacts of the individuals and organizations you will need to call; and a copy in your vehicle for when you are traveling.

Things to do BEFORE your dog is lost:

- Microchip and/or tattoo your dog and register the chip or tattoo with one of the registries: Home Again, Avid, NDR
- Take pictures annually (maybe something to do on the dog's birthday). You'll want a close-up of the dog's head, and body, from different angles (top, front, side) and any special markings the dog may have.
- Make sure your dog wears a safe collar with tags that list your home or cell phone number.
- Find out from your local animal control what shelter covers your town/home. The shelter used by your town may not be the one physically closest to you.
- Make a list with phone numbers of local contacts and update regularly. Contacts should include: local humane societies and shelters, veterinarians and emergency veterinary clinics, the microchip or tattoo registry that you use, local police department and/or sheriff, local pet shops, supply outlets, groomers, training facilities, and businesses (even if not pet-related).
- Keep current local street maps in a file.

What to do if it really happens:

- **Drop Everything** and gather up as many people as possible to help search and do other tasks, such as making and distributing flyers. The longer you delay the actual search, the less likely you are to find your dog. Scout troops, if available in your area, can be a good resource.

- Make multiple copies of street maps of the area where the dog was lost, and surrounding areas. Distribute these to everyone who is helping search for the dog. Provide all searchers with phone numbers where they can reach a real live person to report sightings or information about their search progress.
- Keep a map of all sightings, as well as a distribution record of flyers and areas searched. Keep a notebook with the names of people/places that you have contacted and when you spoke with them.
- Call the local shelters, animal control, police or other law enforcement as necessary to inform them of the missing dog and to find out what shelter(s) cover the area the dog was lost, especially if it not near where the dog lives.
- **Check the local shelter(s) daily.** Depending on your location this could include shelters within a 50 mile radius of your home or where the dog was lost. It's critical that you actually visit these facilities daily!
- Contact local rescue groups and dog clubs. If you are away from home, look in the Yellow Pages. Often times veterinarians will have a list of kennel clubs or rescues in their area that you can use as a starting point.
- Have flyers printed that include pictures of the dog, if a reward will be offered, the last place the dog was seen, and your home or cell phone number. Have two or three hundred printed to start. [Sample](#). Distribution of flyers, door-to-door, is probably the most effective strategy in recovering a lost dog. Get the information in front of everyone you can think of.
- Place flyers on street poles, sign posts, and trees in prominent locations starting with the area the dog was last seen and expanding outward from there. Take flyers to local vet offices, shelters, trainers and training facilities, pet shops, grooming salons and other people that deal with dogs on a regular basis. Ask at local post offices, utilities or delivery services if they can post a flyer in their break rooms so their workers will know about the missing dog. Florists or other businesses that offer delivery services would also be good places to distribute your flyers.
- Contact local media – newspapers, television and radio
- Advertise in your local newspaper about your lost pet – check the found pet section daily. Make the ad large and noticeable!
- Keep a supply of flyers in your car to hand out to people.

- Avoid being taken in by scams. Do not send money to people claiming to have your pet in another state. Do not provide any rewards until the dog is safely back in your arms.
- Don't give up hope! According to experienced searchers, most dogs stay within a few miles of where they were lost. However, be aware that some dogs will follow roads, waterways, etc. that can take them many miles further than the dogs whose just amble around an area. For this reason, you should distribute flyers as widely as possible.

Many websites have information on how to find your lost dog. Here are just a few that you'll want to read and print useful information from. Of particular note is "How to find a lost cat or dog" on the Petrescue.com site.

www.goldenrecovery.org/lostpet.html

www.wonderpuppy.net/lost.htm

home.ipix.net/~pkp.ny.htm

www.widogrescue.com/lostdog.html

www.petrescue.com/library/find-pet.htm

We hope this situation never happens to you and your pet or foster. However, if it does, we wish you a successful outcome and sincerely hope that your dog is safely returned to you.