



SEARCHING FOR A LOST DOG

If your pet has been lost, here are our recommended “best practices”:

- Start search procedures immediately before the dog has time to go far. 90% of lost dogs are found within 2 miles of where they were lost.
- Mobilize all available help (family, neighbors, dog club members, etc.) and assign tasks to each person.
- Drive and walk through the neighborhood calling the dog. Have two people in the car (one driving, the other looking for the dog). Be cautious, calling for the dog at busy intersections as your dog may try to cross the street to get to you.
- Notify all residents of the immediate area to be on the lookout for the dog.
- If your dog is friendly to strangers, check parks and schools.
- If your dog is shy, frightened or may be injured, check places that offer it instinctual seclusion.
- Leave the dog’s crate (if applicable) where the dog was last seen with articles of clothing bearing your scent.
- Leave the gate to your yard open (if you can and it doesn’t affect other fenced in animals) in case the dog returns home on its own.
- Try to locate the owner of a trained tracking dog. If you don’t know of anyone, a local rescue club or tracking club may be willing to help.
- Prepare a written description with the dog’s name, your vet’s name and phone number, and your name and phone number.
- Contact emergency animal hospitals throughout the area leaving the written description (see above) with them, authorizing you will be responsible for any medical attention your dog may need if brought to them.

If the dog is not found within a few hours, start more detailed measures:

- Print and deliver flyers; most owners of lost dogs use about 2,000.
- Notify county animal control officials and all local animal shelters. Policies vary so ask questions and keep records of each center. Some shelters maintain lost dog reports and contact owners if the dog is brought in. Some only follow up if the dog carrier license tags, others must be contacted on a daily basis.
- Notify all law enforcement agencies (police, highway patrol and sheriffs) as they cover different areas.
- Advertise in the local papers offering a reward for information leading to the dog’s recovery.
- Check with local radio and TV stations and some broadcast news about missing pets.
- Notify local dog clubs, all breed, obedience and specialty ones.
- E-mail dog subscriber lists with the written information with an email return address; if not your own, cite one of a friend who will telephone you with any replies.
- Leave your answering machine (if you have one) on 24 hours daily.
- Don’t dismiss any leads no matter how remote they seem.
- Consider consulting with a specialist in finding lost animals.

If the dog isn't found within several days or a week, it may have left the immediate areas, or whoever found it is keeping it. Remember lost dogs have been recovered after many months, and as much as hundreds of miles from where they disappeared.

- Expand the search to surrounding towns and repeat all of the above for each.
- Notify organizations that alert laboratories using animals for experimentation, giving a description especially any identifying marks (tattoo numbering if it exists).

If you are successful and lucky in recovering your dog, do not express anger! Instead, let your dog know how happy you are to see it. Have a treat ready when you do find your dog.

Author: Unknown. Adapted from "The Spot Watch" by Jackie Isabell & Gerald A. Schwartz.

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