



TIPS TO HELP FIND A LOST PET



If your pet dog or cat has become lost, this listing of tips will help you and your pet find each other.

Don't hesitate. The minute you realize your pet is missing, start looking. The sooner you start, the better your chances of success. Start looking at the point where the animal was last seen. Check front and back yards, streets and outbuildings. Dogs are often drawn to places where there are people like parks, schoolyards, shopping areas or restaurants, while cats may hide in small sheltered places

like under porches, behind garbage cans, under cars or in sheds. Then again, your cat may have found its way to a rooftop or up a tree, so look up as well as down.

Call the local animal shelters and animal control. If an immediate search doesn't bring results, you should call all of the local animal shelters to file a lost pet report. Even if you think it is too soon for your pet to have been picked up and taken to a shelter, call and file a report so if someone finds your pet and notifies the shelter, a match can be made with your lost report and the pet can be quickly and safely returned to you without having to be impounded at a shelter. When you call the shelter to make your report, be very specific about what the animal looks like, mention any features that may stand out like scars, spots or stripes and describe the type and color of collar. If you have a photo of the pet, ask the shelter if you can e-mail it to be attached to the written report. Be sure to leave a mobile phone number or a number where a message can be left while you are out searching for your pet.

Regional Animal Shelter 804-769-4983; King William Animal Control 769-0492; King & Queen Animal Control 785-7400; Essex Animal Shelter 443-0726; Caroline Animal Shelter 633-9041; Hanover Animal Shelter 365-6485; New Kent Animal Shelter 966-9516; Gloucester Animal Shelter 693-5290; Middlesex Animal Shelter 758-2779.

Walk and drive through your neighborhood. Call your animal's name and look and listen for a response. Talk to neighbors, children, mail carriers, bus drivers, delivery persons and police. Take a picture with you to show them. This is especially helpful if your pet is an uncommon breed or has unusual markings.

If after several hours of trying the first three steps you've had no luck, move on to the following tips.

Call local veterinarians. Someone may have found your pet injured and taken it to a nearby animal hospital for treatment. Or, someone may find it and decide to keep it, and they may eventually take it to the veterinarian for a check up and vaccinations. Ask the animal hospital to write down a description of your lost pet too, and ask if you can e-mail a picture. King William Veterinary Clinic 769-3200; Aylett Animal Hospital 769-1530; Tri-County Animal Hospital 785-9955.

Use Social Media. Post a lost pet alert and picture on sites such as facebook and craigslist. Ask your friends and contacts to cross-post the information.

Call local radio stations. Some of the local radio stations will announce descriptions of lost pets. They change their programming and bulletins frequently, so you should contact them every day if you want them to continue to announce your lost pet.

Make lost pet flyers. Make your flyer attention getting. Use bold lettering and brightly colored paper which may help draw attention to the flyer. If you have a clear photograph of your pet, use it. Remember that people may not know what "terrier" or "mixed breed" or "Burmese" looks like. If you don't have a photograph, try making a simple line drawing of your pet showing head, ear, tail and body shapes, with major markings like spots or stripes. Include on the flyer a written description of color, size, weight, age, sex, and other distinguishing features. Note whether the animal was wearing a collar and tags when lost. Put your phone number on the flyer along with the number of a friend likely to be home when you're not. That way you won't miss an important phone call if you are out. Lastly, consider offering a reward. You don't have to state what the reward is, but the offer of a reward might motivate people to be observant, to make otherwise indifferent people take action if they see your pet, or to return an animal they might have considered keeping or selling.

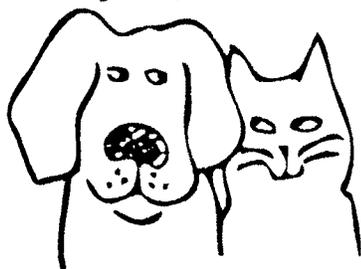
Distribute lost pet flyers. Make 50 to 100 copies of your flyer. Photocopies do an adequate job of reproducing photographs. Post the flyers in prominent places around your community and neighboring areas. Put on telephone poles, in stores, shopping centers, laundromats, restaurants, gas stations, schools, animal hospitals and shelters. Remember the bulletin boards in supermarkets, libraries and churches. Hand one to service workers who frequent your neighborhood and others, such as bus drivers, mail carriers, police officers, delivery drivers, newspaper carriers.

Use the local newspapers. Place an ad in the classified section under "lost & found". If you can afford a larger ad perhaps with a picture, the more you do the better. List the pet's predominant breed, sex, age, colors and patterns, color and type of collar and tags, area where and when lost, and mention a reward if you are offering one. Remember to include your name, phone number and the best time to call. Be sure to check the "found" ads every day to see if someone advertises finding your pet. Be sure to make allowances for breed interpretations and descriptions.

Call area animal shelters daily and visit in person every 3 days. Although your pet is unique to you, shelters handle thousands of animals and they may not recognize it from your description, especially mixed breeds and cats. If you do not find your pet among the animals displayed, be sure to ask about animals held in other parts of the facility. Often there is an isolation area for sick or injured animals. Ask the shelter to check their record of animals found dead. Even if the news is bad, it is better than the continued wondering and worrying about your pet's fate.

Don't give up. Many pets turn up weeks or months after they disappear. Keep checking with area shelters regularly, read the classified ads, and keep people in your neighborhood aware that your pet is still missing.

On the happy day you find your pet, be sure to notify everyone you have asked for help from. Call the animal shelters and hospitals and cancel your lost report, tell your neighbors and neighborhood service workers, take down your flyers, and vow to never let it happen again.



Continued

Prevention. No matter how careful you are, there are things you can't control. The gate may be unsecured, the wind may blow the door open, a break in, a fire, a car accident. Make sure your pet always wears a collar, even for "inside" cats since no house is "escape-proof" use a safety collar (break away collar), with the proper identification at all times. This will help insure that your pet will be returned quickly and safely, and it tends to make people more willing to help, whether holding the pet until they contact you or by taking it to an animal shelter or hospital. Keep your pets under control indoors, in a fenced yard, or walked on a leash by a responsible person. Cats should not be allowed to roam, and should only be outside when you are available to supervise them. Have your pets spayed or neutered. This will make them more content to stay close to home and not wander in search of the opposite sex.



Traveling or vacationing with your pet. Stick a piece of adhesive tape to your pet's collar with your name, local (vacation) address and phone number written with ballpoint pen.

