

Oh where oh where has my little dog gone oh where oh where could he be? With his hair cut short and his tail cut long...

What to do when your pet is missing. When you realize your pet is missing a panic over comes.

Follow these steps to help assure your pet will return home safely.

- **Act fast** the sooner you start looking the better the chance and the sooner you will find your pet.
- **Search your house** make sure you have searched your house and yard several times. Look under beds, crawl space under house. Ask the neighbors to do the same.
- **Search your neighborhood**, knock on doors and talk to all your neighbors. Leave a phone number with them in case they find your pet at a later time. Walk, ride a bicycle or drive slowly through your neighborhood and make some noise while you go around the neighborhood (call the pet's name also). Animals can hear you from very long distances. Bring your pet's favorite things with you, a "squeaky" toy or favorite treats and rattle them loudly while calling your pet's name. It's also important to stop regularly, be quiet, and listen to see if your pet is making any noise. Sometimes they may make a noise in reply or they may be hiding somewhere whimpering or barking.
- **Post fliers** at intersections, around your neighborhood and on car windows. Place signs within a 2-mile radius of where your pet was lost. You can also post signs at grocery stores, pet stores, vet offices, and apartment complexes. Don't put your name or address on the flier, but make sure there is contact info such as a phone number and/or email address. Put a color photo preferably and include the date and where the pet was lost as well as a couple distinguishing marks. Don't include all distinguishing marks, withhold some marks and characteristics so if someone does call you can verify that they actually found your pet by telling you some distinguishing marks. Include the breed of dog or cat, sex, age, weight and color, use bright colored paper for higher visibility. Give copies of your flier to people that walk their dogs in the area. They're more likely to spot animals than most people. If you go to the parks early, you may find people who regularly walk their dogs together as an informal group.
- **Go to all the local shelters** within a 20-mile radius and the government agencies charged with picking up stray and lost animals and look for yourself, at least every other day. Calling the animal control department or shelter on the phone is not very effective. Your pet may not yet be listed in the records at the front desk, and the way you describe your pet may not be the way a

shelter describes your dog or pet. Any animal may become dirty, matted and neglected looking very quickly, and you must visit the shelter, even if your pet was wearing tags when it was lost. You should go to the shelters at least every other day. Few shelters can keep animals for more than 72 hours. Sometimes it takes more than a few days for a pet to be picked up and brought to a shelter. It's important to visit all the shelters within 20 miles of where your pet was lost. In many areas stray animals are picked up by a government agency which holds them for a period and then turns them over to a shelter. If someone took your pet in for a few days hoping you would knock on their door and ask about it, they might later drop your pet off at the shelter that's most convenient for them, rather the one that's closest.

- **Use the Power of Scent:** Place a recently worn article of clothing belonging to a family member or the lost pet's unwashed bedding in your yard or outside your front door where the breeze can carry the scent. Familiar scents can bring them home. Cats will respond to an open can of tuna fish or litter box also.
- **Contact veterinary clinics** both in your area and surrounding areas. An animal could have been injured, rescued and taken out of the area in any direction for some distance so check them thoroughly and often.
- **Place an advertisement** in your local & community newspapers, some will even place ads for free. Check often columns dealing with "lost and found" and animals for at least two months. Advertise on both Sunday as well as during the week as some people on get the Sunday paper. Make sure you also check the newspaper's found section as most newspapers will provide free ads for people who have found lost pets.
- **ID Tags:** If your pet's ID tags have an old address and phone, contact the people who now live at that address and now have that phone number - even if they are out-of-town numbers. Let them know your pet is missing and give them your current information. Check back with them occasionally, in case they lose your information. If your pet has current information on his ID tags, follow all these tips anyway. Collars come off very easily and he may no longer have ID on them.
 - **Microchips:** When your pet is micro chipped, be sure to register your pet's microchip with the microchip company (the person who implanted the microchip should provide you with the microchip company's information). Don't make the mistake of thinking that all you need to do is microchip your pet and your vet will keep all the information in a database. You must take the extra step to make sure the microchip is registered in the microchip company's database. The vet will not do it for you. When your pet is lost, contact your microchip company to be sure they have your current contact information.

Also ask them to check to see if anyone has reported your pet as having been scanned. Microchips are important and they can help identify your pet, but keep in mind they are not 100% effective. Different microchip companies use different scanners and not everyone has access to all of the various scanners. There is a universal scanner, but not all animal shelters or veterinarians have one. Also, sometimes scanners can fail. Even microchips can fail, or they can move to an area of an animal's body that no one thinks to scan. And even though most shelters are supposed to scan the animals they take in, unfortunately sometimes a shelter worker will inadvertently skip that step, or they might assume that someone else already did it. Please remember that a microchip is NOT the same as a GPS. It cannot track your pet's location.

- **User Tip:** On day 12 of searching for my dog in a heavily wooded area, distraught and hopeless, I ran into a couple of hunters. They said they lost the occasional dog on a hunt but always got them back. What they told me has helped many dogs and families be reunited.
 - The dog owner should take an article of clothing that has been worn at least all day, the longer the better, so the lost dog can pick up the scent. Bring the article of clothing to the location where the dog was last seen and leave it there. Also, if the dog has a crate & familiar toy, you can bring those too (unless location is undesirable for crate). You might also want to leave a note requesting item(s) not to be moved.
 - Leave a bowl of water there too, as the dog probably hasn't had access to any. Do NOT bring food as this could attract other animals that the dog might avoid. Come back the next day, or check intermittently if possible. Hopefully the dog will be waiting there. I was skeptical and doubted my dog would be able to detect an article of clothing if he didn't hear me calling his name as loud as possible all day for 12 days. But I returned the next day and sure enough found him sitting there! I hope this helps someone out there who's missing a best friend.

- **Alert Service Providers:** Your mail carrier delivers your mail and the mail in a multi-mile radius. Your trash collectors are also driving through your neighborhood and those around you. Leave a photo, description, and contact information in your mailbox and taped to your trash receptacles.
 - **Contact the Former Owner:** If you recently adopted your pet from an individual, check with the previous owner. Your pet may be trying to find its way back to what used to be "home"

- **Unfortunately**, you must also check to find out if your pet has been fatally injured on the road. This is very sad, but necessary as you may never know otherwise and it's best to know if they passed on. The road crews for your local and state department of transportation (DOT) are usually in charge of picking up deceased animals from the roadside and city streets. Sometimes Animal Control will also do this, so check with them. Dogs are picked up quicker than cats, usually within 24 hours, so check with them everyday to see if they have found them.

Humane Education Society

<https://www.heschatt.org/programs-services/lost-pets/>

McKamey Animal Center

<https://www.mckameyanimalcenter.org/>

Pet Placement center

<https://www.petplacementcenter.com/>

East Ridge Animal Services

<https://www.eastridgeanimalservices.org/>

Nextdoor

<https://nextdoor.com/>

Paw-boost

<https://www.pawboost.com/site/rescue-squad>

Lost/found Hamilton

**Walker, Catoosa, and
surrounding area**

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=lost%2Ffound%20hamilton%20walker%20catoosa%20and%20surrounding%20counties&epa>

Chattanooga Pets Lost & Found

<https://www.facebook.com/ChattanoogaPetsLostAndFound/>

Tennessee Valley Lost and Found

<https://www.facebook.com/Tennessee-Valley-Lost-and-Found-Pets-705398656155215/>

WDEF Lost & Found Pets

<https://wdef.com/category/pets-lost-found/>

Missing Pets Chattanooga

<https://www.facebook.com/missingpets.chattanooga/>

Lost Pets Near Chattanooga, TN

<https://petkey.org/lost-pets/city/chattanooga/tn/>

Lost my Kitty

<https://www.lostmykitty.com/missing-pets.cfm>

Lost my Dog

<http://www.lostmydoggie.com/missing-pets.cfm>

PAWRright Pet Services

423/877-6174

<http://www.paw-right.com>