



How to Prevent Your Dog or Cat from Being Part of the Lost Animal Tragedy

Millions of dogs and cats enter shelters each year as lost or “stray” animals. Nationally, however, only 16% of lost dogs and 2% of lost cats are ever found and claimed from shelters by their guardians. This contributes to the massive euthanasia of shelter animals in this country and is an easily preventable tragedy.

HOW TO PREVENT YOUR ANIMAL FROM BECOMING LOST

1) **Don't let your animals roam on their own.**

Make sure your animals are always safely confined or in your care.

2) **Spay and neuter your animals.** Unsterilized animals, especially males, are much more likely to wander and become lost. An unneutered male dog can smell a female in heat up to 5 miles away.

3) **Identification is a lost animal's ticket back home.**

- Experts agree that the best form of identification is a combination of a collar and ID tag (which is clearly visible and easy for anyone to use), combined with a microchip (which is permanent and cannot be removed).

- Stretchy “safety” collars are available for cats.

- Even indoor animals should wear identification – they are even more vulnerable should they get out and become lost.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR ANIMAL IS LOST

1) **Contact your local animal shelter.** File a lost animal report with every shelter within a 40 mile radius of your home, and visit the nearest shelters daily. Find your local shelters on www.pets911.com or www.petfinder.com.

2) **Search the neighborhood.** Walk or drive around your neighborhood several times a day. Call your animal's name. Ask neighbors if they have seen your animal.

3) **Advertise.** Post flyers in your neighborhood at local stores, traffic intersections, in community centers

and veterinary offices. Use the internet – there are many websites devoted to helping people find their lost animals. Place a “lost” ad in newspapers. When describing your animal, leave out one identifying characteristic so you can ensure that a person who says they found your animal really did.

4) **Don't give up.** Animals have been known to be reunited with their guardians weeks and even months after being lost. Many people give up too quickly. Keep looking.

Everyone can help end America's homeless animal tragedy



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WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A LOST ANIMAL

- 1) Look for identification.** Check the collar carefully for guardian information. Take the animal to your veterinarian or animal shelter to have him/her scanned for a microchip.
- 2) Contact your local animal shelter.** Ask them to file a “found animal” report; they may also be able to match the animal you found with reports of lost animals.
- 3) Advertise.** Put up posters around your neighborhood and in your community. Always withhold one identifying characteristic to verify the guardian’s authenticity.
- 4) Check the lost and found ads in the newspapers.** Place a found ad – many newspapers publish these free of charge.
- 5) Use the internet.** There are many websites dedicated to helping lost animals find their way home.

SHOULD YOU TAKE A LOST ANIMAL TO THE SHELTER?

If you are able to temporarily house the lost animal, it will greatly increase the chance that he/she will be reunited with their guardian quickly and with minimal stress (and it will prevent the animal you found from displacing another shelter animal). However, even if you cannot

house the animal while you look for his guardian, you can still post posters and place a found ad in the newspaper indicating that he/she is now at the shelter. If an animal appears sick or injured, take him/her to a veterinarian or the shelter right away.

RESOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION ON LOST ANIMALS

www.missingpet.net

www.hsus.org Click “PETS”, then “Pet Care”

www.Pets911.com

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