

PLAN OF ACTION TO FIND A LOST DOG

Losing your dog is traumatic and overwhelming, but this plan of action will help you organize and conduct a search.

Accidents happen, so do not waste time and distract from the common mission by assigning blame.

Searching is a team effort. However, choose one point person for coordination. Communication is key. Keep people updated daily with e-mail, a phone tree, or free conference call.

Don't give up! Many dogs are found weeks or months after they are lost.

Before starting your search:

Search for your dog in your home/neighborhood immediately, Pass out your contact number to everyone you see while searching your neighborhood. If you don't find your dog immediately...

Get organized:

- Organize all current information about the lost dog (name, color of collar, tags, current picture, breed, etc.)
- Place a blanket the dog has used along with a dish of canned or tasty human food where he/she was last seen, so your dog has something familiar to come back to and remain in the area.
- Mobilize your friends and family to assist you in getting the word out and searching for your dog.

Remind your search team not to shout and chase your dog if they find him/her. This may make your dog feel threatened and panic. Tell them to squat or lie down quietly, avert their eyes, and lure the dog with tasty treats, or turn away slowly and encourage the dog to follow.

Create flyers and posters:

- Include date, where dog was lost, thorough description, special instructions (including "Do not approach—pet is frightened and confused and may run"), and contact phone. For examples, visit:
www.missingpetpartnership.org/recovery-posters.php
- Print at least 500 copies (depending on size of area). Reduce your flyers to ¼-page size so you can fit four flyers to a page for use in residential areas.
- Pass out flyers door to door and post in every business/public place. Talk to everyone about your missing dog. *Note:* It is illegal to put flyers in mailboxes. Sticking them to the door or mailbox is an acceptable alternative.
- Create posters using neon-colored poster board. For examples, visit:
www.missingpetpartnership.org/recovery-posters.php

When handing out flyers, be sure you and your search team talk to people about your dog. People will sympathize with you and go the extra mile. Try to hit the highest concentration of people. Locate a school or church nearest to where your dog escaped or the latest sighting, and pass out flyers at departure times. If your dog is shy or timid, it is important to tell people not to approach your dog because he/she is scared and confused—just call you immediately with a sighting. Carry a leash and a quart bag of treats with you at all times.

Change your voicemail announcement:

Change your voicemail announcements (home and mobile) asking callers to leave a detailed message if they have sighted your dog:

“If you are calling about (*your dog’s name*), please leave your name and phone number, along with the time and location of your sighting—including street number or intersection, as well as the direction my dog was going. Thank you for calling.”

Notify by phone (include jurisdictions that surround your town/county):

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal control | <input type="checkbox"/> Local shelters/Rescues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police department | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinarians |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your microchip company | <input type="checkbox"/> Highway/public works dept. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal service businesses | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic calling services to inform general public (there is a charge): | |

Findtoto.com

Lostmydoggie.com

Post to Internet sites and check their lost-pet postings:

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lost Dogs Illinois (Facebook):
www.facebook.com/pages/Lost-Dogs-Illinois/115100465214113 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lost Dogs of Wisconsin (Facebook):
www.facebook.com/pages/Lost-Dogs-of-Wisconsin/395490441240 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Craigslist.com | <input type="checkbox"/> Petfinder.com (<i>lost & found</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FindFido.com | <input type="checkbox"/> Thecenterforlostpets.com |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LostandPound.com | |

Place print, online, and radio ads, and check found-dog ads:

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio stations |
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Maps:

- Call local Chamber of Commerce for a street map of the area where dog is missing.
- Go to googleearth.com, maps.yahoo.com, or maps.google.com to get an aerial view of the area.
- Divide the map into sections. Highlight and assign each section to a volunteer to distribute flyers. Use a 2-mile radius. If there are no sightings, expand the search area.
- Use a separate map to record sightings of the dog. Record the date, time, and exact location of each sighting. *Suggestion:* Use an Excel spreadsheet or spiral notebook to record sightings.

If no sightings:

- Start from the beginning and expand your search area.
- Check Petfinder.com and Petango.com to see if your dog was surrendered to a shelter/rescue and has been put up for adoption.

Trapping (if needed):

Contact your local animal control facility and/or shelter for a dog trap. Make sure the trap is large enough to fit your dog.

Traps are available from:

www.animal-traps.com

www.livetrapping.com

Search dogs:

Place something that has your dog's scent in a plastic bag, in case you need to bring in a scent-tracking dog.

Websites for more information:

www.MissingPetPartnership.org

www.LostDogSearch.com

www.massanimalcoalition.com/resources/lost-and-found-resources.html

Once the dog is recovered:

Remove all flyers and posters. Take down Web postings and discontinue ads. Let all agencies you contacted know that the dog has been recovered and thank them for their assistance.

Nose to the Ground to Help Hounds (www.savethehounds.org)