

PROTECT YOUR HOUND FROM ESCAPING

Hounds are escape artists, so it is important to keep them safe. Here are some suggestions to help.

Place personal ID, rabies tags, and town license tags on your dog's collar, and keep the collar on your dog 24/7. If you use a harness in conjunction with a collar, place the tags on the harness in case the collar is removed.

Microchip your dog. In combination with an ID tag, a microchip is your safest bet for getting your lost dog returned to you safely. These tiny chips are embedded between your dog's shoulders. When scanned, they can be used to identify your dog and his owner. Update your information with the registry if you move!

Purchase a GPS collar if you have a chronic escape artist, so you can locate your dog.

Use a sturdy, traditional leash. Slip your hand through the leash loop, wrap the leash around your wrist and hold on securely. This will prevent the dog from bolting and pulling the lead out of your hand. Of course, be sensible and don't do this with a strong, unpredictable dog, or he might drag you down the street! Forgo retractable leashes, as they can be unsafe if dropped and dragged by the dog.

Do not give children the responsibility to walk dogs until they are old enough to understand the safety precautions. Also consider their physical ability to handle a dog.

For maximum protection against a dog slipping out of its collar, consider using a martingale collar and harness together while walking your dog. If using an Easy Walker or SENSE-ation Harness, attach the leash to the D ring of the harness and to the D ring of the martingale collar. If using a regular harness, use a carabiner or coupler to attach the D ring of back of harness to the D ring of collar. You may also use to use one leash for the collar and one leash for harness.

Teach your dog the command "Wait."

All outside doors in your home should be gated or have a storm door to prevent your hound from bolting out the door. Don't forget the door that leads to the garage, where the garage door may be open. If gating isn't an option, consider using an x-pen to block escapes and give a second layer of protection.

If you have a fenced-in yard, check it on a routine basis to make sure that it is secure and that digging has not taken place at the fence line. If you have invisible fencing, make sure to replace the batteries on the collar according to manufacturer's guidelines. Lock your gates with a padlock to keep people from gaining access to your pet and house.

Never leave a dog outside on a run alone. Dogs can become tangled, are vulnerable to other animals, and have no ability to defend themselves. Dogs have been injured or killed by other dogs and coyotes.

Make sure your vet, groomer, and kennel understand hounds and their desire to escape and run. Look for a business that has a secure fenced area for walking dogs. If this isn't possible, be sure to share your set-up with your leash, collar and harness with the staff. Make sure they will not use a slip lead on your dog. Most businesses take their own precautions, but you can never be too safe. Always ask what safeguards they have in place. Don't be shy—the safety of your pet depends on it!

In the car, use a crate or a dog safety harness, and make sure your dog is wearing his ID tag. Dogs allowed free run of the car are at risk after an accident if they escape. If you are in an accident, the first responder is to treat you, not to take care of your animals. Bark Buckle Up has first responder cards to place in your glove compartment and a sticker to put on the window.

If you have a fenced-in yard and a fearful or shy dog, consider leaving a long lead on the dog when outside, so you will have something to grab when you need to bring the dog indoors. Remain outside with your dog to make sure the leash does not become tangled around vegetation, trees, or furniture.

If you have a fearful or shy dog or a new puppy, consider keeping a short puppy lead on the dog while in the house so that you can quickly grab the lead when you need to redirect the dog. Keep the lead short, and beware of tangling.

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