



# LOST FOUND AND STOLEN DOGS

## What to do if you've found a stray dog

*If you've found a stray dog and you're not sure what to do, The Animal House has some advice to help...*

If you've found a stray dog, check to see if they're wearing a tag with the owner's details on. If they are, and you're happy to do this, contact the owner and arrange to give them back the dog.

Otherwise contact your local authority dog warden via your local council 01926 456734 or 01788 533859. They are legally responsible for stray dogs and will come and collect the dog from you and take them to a holding kennels while they wait to see if their owner will claim them.

Register the dog as "found" on [DogLost](#), which is a national online lost and found website.

Although it might be tempting to keep the dog, you're legally required to let the local authority know about any stray dogs and, if you don't, you could be accused of theft.

There may be a loving owner out there who is desperately searching for their missing dog and, if the dog is microchipped, it could be really easy to reunite them.

You can take them to any veterinary surgery for them to see if the dog has a microchip

It's very easy to get attached to a dog the longer you keep them, so please do let someone know as soon as possible.

**If you do want to keep the dog, let the local authority know and they may be able to arrange for you to rehome them if no one claims them.**

### What to do if you've lost your dog

By law, your dog should always wear a collar and tag with your name and address on when out in public. It will also be compulsory for all dogs to be microchipped by 2016.

If your dog is wearing a tag and is microchipped, this will hugely increase your chances of being reunited with them if they go missing.

If your dog has gone missing, here are some things you can do:

- Call the microchip database they are registered with and report them as lost or stolen. Make sure your contact details are always up to date.
- Contact your local authority dog warden, via your local council 01926 456734 they are legally responsible for stray dogs and may well have picked up your pet. They will hold on to stray dogs for seven days but, after this time, dogs will be rehomed or put to sleep if no home can be found for them.
- Contact neighbouring local authorities too as dogs may move across local council borders
- Call local kennels/charities – it's possible someone has found the dog and taken them to a local rehoming centre or kennels. The Dogs Trust Honiley is our largest local re-homing centre 01926 484398.
- Contact local vet surgeries or animal hospitals – if your dog has been injured, they may have been taken there for treatment
- Check online lost and found websites and notice boards in your local area. Register your dog on DogLost, a free national database which is run by volunteers who will help you to search for your dog.
- If you think your dog has been stolen, call the police
- Put up notices in your local area with an up to date photo of your dog
- Visit places where other dog walkers go and ask them to keep an eye out for your dog



## Protect your dog against theft

*According to the Missing Pets Bureau as many as 38 per cent of all animals reported lost have actually been stolen and as many as 60 per cent of these are tragically never recovered.*

In spite of these startling figures, many dogs are still left tied up outside shops, or in unattended vehicles where they are easily stolen. Once stolen, a dog can be moved many miles in a short space of time so prevention is vital.

Whilst pedigree pets are at the greatest risk due to the cost of purchasing pedigree puppies, non-pedigree dogs can also be at risk as thieves wait for a reward to be offered.

## Keeping your dog safe

- Think twice before leaving your dog tied up outside a shop. You will make them a vulnerable and tempting target for opportunist thieves.
- Don't leave your dog alone in the car, even for a few minutes. Thieves can easily break into your car to steal your precious pet.
- Make sure your dog is microchipped and that you keep your contact details up-to-date, especially if you move house or change your telephone number.
- Your dog should always wear a collar and ID tag with your name and address on it. This is a legal requirement when your dog is in a public place. Avoid putting your dog's name on the disc.
- Take clear photographs of your dog from various angles, and update them regularly. Make a note of any distinguishing features.
- Have lots of photographs of yourself with your dog, to help you to prove ownership if needed. Train your dog to come back when called, and never let him off the lead if you are not sure he will come back to you. If in doubt, use an extending lead, especially if you are in an unfamiliar area where your dog may get lost more easily.
- Take care when choosing someone to care for your dog if you are going away from home or need a dog walker whilst you go to work. Use a reputable company or boarding kennels and check references for people who provide dog or house-sitting services.
- Beware of strangers asking you questions about your dog.
- Vary your times of walks and routes; some dogs are actually targeted and snatched during walks.
- At home, make sure your garden is secure and fit a bell to the gate so you hear if anyone opens it.

- Keep your dog in view in the garden, don't just leave him outside unsupervised.
- If you breed puppies for sale, take great care when inviting people in to view; ideally have someone else present and limit the numbers of people you allow in at a time. Show the puppies in one secure area.
- Decide who owns the dog in your household. Discuss who would own the dog in the event of bereavement or break up and draw up documentation to this effect. This may seem unnecessary, but pets can become the centre of ownership disputes in these circumstances.

## If the worst happens

- If your dog is lost or suspected stolen, it is important to act quickly.
- Report the loss to your local council's Dog Warden and those in all other neighbouring local authorities.
- Visit places where dog walkers go such as local parks and public places and talk to people, asking them to keep an eye open for your dog.
- If you believe your pet has been stolen, report it to the police and insist it is recorded as a theft and not a lost animal.
- Report the loss/theft to the microchip database, this will ensure that if anyone tries to re-register the chip number, you will be informed.
- Make posters and display them in areas local to your home and also in relevant places such as vets, local parks etc. The poster should include a clear photograph and details of the circumstances.
- Make sure local vets are aware in case someone takes your dog in for treatment.
- Report the loss on as many as possible of the missing animals websites – there is no single national missing animals database, so you will have to place the same information on all of them to ensure a widespread appeal.
- Contact local animal shelters and rescue charities and send them posters to display.

Losing a pet due to theft or other reasons is a traumatic event. Blue Cross operates the national [Pet Bereavement Support Service](#) which can be contacted on 0800 096 6606 (8.30am – 8.30pm) or by email: [pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk).

**IF IN ANY DOUBT PLEASE CALL US ON 01926 494923  
or 01788 575300**