



## Missing Dog Recovery Tips

### When You've Lost Your Companion Animal

When a beloved companion animal strays from home it can be a traumatic experience for both you and your missing pet. The Whatcom Humane Society receives many lost cats, dogs, and other animals **daily** and we make every attempt to contact an owner if a pet has identification. Our goal is to reunite as many stray pets with their guardians as possible. However, **due to the large volume of animals the Whatcom Humane Society receives each day, we cannot identify lost pets via phone, social media, or e-mail communication. Please visit the shelter and complete a Lost Pet Report.**

#### Social Dogs:

- Social dogs are usually easy to approach or willing to come to any person who calls them, so they are often taken into someone's home or brought to a shelter.
- If your social dog has a favorite noisy toy, bring it with you on your search of the neighborhood. After using the toy to make noise, remember to pause and give your pet a chance to respond.

#### Shy and Fearful Dogs:

- Distance traveled from home will depend on if he/she has been chased by anyone attempting to catch him/her.
- If you have more than one dog, bring your other dog(s) with you as you search the area.
- When hanging lost dog posters/flyers or online lost ads, be sure to include something to the effect of "Fearful, do not chase!" and be sure to include your phone number.

#### General Tips:

- **Visit the Whatcom Humane Society and complete a Lost Dog Report.** Check back at the shelter every 3-5 days if possible. If the pet has ID, the shelter will attempt to contact you, but collars can fall off and microchip errors can occur, so re-visiting the shelter is recommended.
- **Report the pet missing on Petco Love Lost at [lost.petcolove.org](http://lost.petcolove.org).** Photos of stray dogs brought to WHS or found by community members are posted on Petco Love Lost. However, checking the shelter in-person is still recommended in case of technical issues.
- Post your lost pet on social media pages like **Lost Pets of Whatcom County** (Facebook page), online neighborhood groups like **Nextdoor**, and Bellingham **Craigslist** in the Lost & Found and Pets sections.
- Dogs that escape due to opportunity (A gate/door left open, habitual diggers or climbers, etc.) are more likely to be closer to home than a dog who is running due to panic or fear.
- Search the neighborhood and go door-to-door talking to as many people in-person as possible.

#### General Tips Continued:

- Hang lost dog posters at highly trafficked areas like intersections.
- Leave your dogs bed/crate with his scent on it outside near the door in a safe, dry place. If your pet returns home, he/she will have a familiar place to stay.
- Do not rely on just one recovery method (lost pet fliers only) when searching for your pet, utilizing multiple search methods will give you the best chance at being reunited with your lost dog.
- Websites such as **www.fidoalert.com** and **www.pawboost.com** help issuing mass lost pet notifications to people and businesses in your area.

### **Reunited...and it feels so good!**

Each year in the United States millions of companion animals enter shelters as strays. There are many ways to prevent your four-footed friend from disappearing. These tips can help you beat the odds:

- Be a responsible pet guardian and keep your pet safely confined, leashed, or supervised at all times.
- Spay or neuter your pet. The most effective way to prevent your companion animal from disappearing is to have them spayed or neutered. This will curb their desire to roam.
- Identification is a lost pet's ticket home. Always keep a collar and ID tags on your dog and consider having them microchipped, a permanent form of identification. **(Microchipping is offered on a walk-in basis at the Whatcom Humane Society for \$30)**
- An accurate description of your pet is vital. Keep a record of your animal's size, with any distinguishing markings or characteristics, along with a current photo.
- Safe travel. If you must travel with your pet, use a leash or carrier at all times to keep him/her safe.

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