

LOST AND MISSING DOGS

Missing and stolen dogs seem to be all over social media at the moment so we thought we would put something together to help people ensure their dogs are kept safe and also tell them what to do should the worst happen. The majority of this information we have “stolen” from a fabulous dog theft leaflet produced by Val Davies so a huge thank you to Val for all the work she put into that.

It's a long read (and this is a condensed version) but if your dog goes missing you will be glad you have read it.

Most people will think it will never happen to them **BUT** sadly this is not the case.

Dog theft is on the increase and wherever you look on social media you will find posts from people who have had their dogs stolen. The majority of these are still stolen from kennels or gardens where dogs have been left unattended; however more recently thefts from houses, cars and even from people out walking their dogs are increasing. No dog is exempt as they will steal dogs of any breed, sex or age. They can be taken as someone fancies owning that dog, to sell on, to be held to ransom (they know most owners will offer a reward for their dogs safe return), to be used for dog fighting and some will steal a dog just because they can.



Dogs can also go missing for a variety of reasons without being stolen, a gate left open, a damaged fence, escaping a car after an accident, chasing something on a walk, getting themselves stuck on or in something. Even older dogs that have never strayed far from you before can get lost as their hearing/sight deteriorates and they can easily become disorientated. Many dogs that just go missing will be picked up by someone that sees them alone, what that person does with them determines how easy it is for you to be reunited with them.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY DOG?

Make sure your dog wears a collar and ID with up to date information (**this is a legal requirement**). If your dog goes missing this is the quickest and easiest way to be reunited. Most people finding a missing dog will either ring the number on the tag or if local return it home. Check your dog's collar and tag regularly to ensure they are not worn and are readable and not likely to fall off.



Get your dog microchipped (again this is a legal requirement), it's quick, permanent and usually the dog hardly notices its insertion. **Make sure your details are always kept up to date on the database.** Also get into the habit of asking your vet to scan your dog everytime you visit, this confirms that the microchip is still in place and working.



Consider having your dog's ear tattooed, it's easily visible and another deterrent. It isn't done like we would have a tattoo and only takes a moment but it does leave a permanent easily visible identification mark. **Again make sure your details are always kept up to date on the database.**

www.dog-register.co.uk/find-a-tattooist/

[See how it is done by clicking here](#)

Consider getting a GPS tracker for your dogs collar. If your dog goes missing on a walk or escapes from your home you can easily track where they are on your mobile phone. If your dog is stolen the thieves will probably remove your dogs collar but a tracker will at least show you where they were at the time the collar was removed.

The majority of dogs that are stolen have been left somewhere unattended (especially in kennels) so

Use secure kennels. If you need to keep your dogs in outside kennels, make sure they are very secure with an alarm system and CCTV as a deterrent.

Never leave dogs outside shops etc – they are an easy target.

Don't leave your dog in the car (even if locked) - dogs are often taken from or with vehicles.

Never just let your dog out on the street alone.

Make sure your garden is secure; dogs are regularly stolen from gardens. Bolt and lock the gate. Make sure you can see/hear if anyone attempts to come into your garden and don't leave dogs unattended in them.

Secure your house. When you leave your dogs home alone make sure your home is secure, a good alarm system and CCTV will help protect both your dog and your home from thieves.

Don't allow your dog to run free out of your sight, you don't know what is happening if you can't see your dog, it could be enticed away or get itself stuck on or in something..



WHAT DO I DO IF MY DOG GOES MISSING OR IS STOLEN

The first thing to do is ASK FOR HELP. Friends, family and fellow dog lovers will be happy to help so don't be afraid to ask.



Have good pictures ready. Prepare in advance and make sure you have good pictures of your dog just in case. You don't need general pictures, take them specially for this purpose. They should have only the one dog on and should show your dog from all angles (full face, full body from both sides and from above) and if any unusual markings take a close up of these. If you have your dog clipped/trimmed it is also worth having the same photos before and after they have been clipped. Keep these photos where they are easy to access both on your computer and mobile phone.

Report to Police. If you believe your dog has been stolen do a quick check in case the dog is hiding or shut in, if not found call the police. Make sure you get a **CRIME** number (not an incident number as they are not the same thing, a crime number means action should be taken not just logged)

Call the local Dog Warden. (Number usually found under local Council). It is an idea to have your local dog wardens number programmed into your phone along with your dogs microchip number.



Register your dog on the DogLost database, www.doglost.co.uk 08448003880. They have extensive knowledge of lost/stolen dogs and will help, advice, distribute posters and their network of helpers will help you too.

Call your microchip/tattoo company and report the dog as missing/stolen, make sure they record this fact. Again keeping their contact details and your dogs microchip number on your phone will make it easier and quicker to do.

Inform any breed specific rescue you can find.

You need to call ALL pounds and kennels, if possible someone who knows the dog should go to the kennels to check rather than just phone as not all details are always recorded correctly. People don't always recognise breeds so may record the dog as a different breed or cross breed, microchips are sometimes missed, ages are estimated so may not be correct and sometimes even the sex of the dog can be incorrectly recorded. Remember once a dog has been with the dog warden for 7 days it can be rehomed or worse still put to sleep so time is of the essence.

Print off and distribute posters, if you have registered your dog on doglost you can download ready made posters direct from the site. Put up posters at vets, training classes, pet shops, dog walking areas, lampposts, anywhere and everywhere. Speak to dog walkers and people on the street (and get help to do this).

Get on social media (your friends and family can help with this) and get your dogs details out to as many people/groups as possible. However you choose to do this always include your doglost link to your dogs poster, this way people can always get the most up to date information on your dog and also print/share the poster and help you further.



Look for your Dog At the same time as doing all this if your dog has gone missing rather than having been stolen you need to be looking for it (even if stolen they may just have dumped it or it could have escaped from them). If your dog has gone missing whilst out on a walk search for as long as you can if you don't find your dog and have to go home leave something with your scent on it at the place you last saw them it then go back with something of theirs bed/toy etc (we have even read that the contents of your vaccum cleaner can help) often this will be enough to encourage your dog to return to this spot and it will hopefully be waiting for you when you go back. If not search your neighborhood both on foot and by car, dogs are more active at dawn and dusk so search at other times as well, but focus on those two time periods. Cover the paths where you normally walk your dog (remembering that it may be stuck in/on something so unable to come to you), as well as surrounding areas. Draw a circle on a map with your home at the center. Extend the radius out a few miles so you can cover the area in a comprehensive, methodical way. Grab a leash, and take along some really stinky, yummy food you know your dog will love. If your dog has a favorite toy, bring that along as well. Toys that make noise, such as ones that squeak or jingle, are best. Whether you're walking or driving, go slowly and shout out your dog's name in a happy voice. (If you're in a vehicle, having someone else drive so you're free to shout out the window is advised). If you have another dog, or have access to another dog yours is friends with, take that dog along on searches. Ask anyone you meet whether they have seen your dog and give them a poster so if they see your dog at a later time they can contact you. Dog can very quickly go into something called survival mode (a good explanation of this can be found at <https://www.buddhadogrescueandrecovery.com/pages/survival-mode>) which means they won't always come to people that know them so you need to keep this in your mind.

Ask the people at doglost.co.uk for advice, they will be able to help you.