

LOST DOG PREPARATION

THINGS TO DO NOW - There are many things you can do right now to prevent or prepare for a lost dog situation.

Tag Collars. Use a break-away tag collar to hold your dog's tags and your contact information. This should be different from the collar he wears on walks, which you can leave attached to the leash. Always leave the tag collar on, and if your dog slips his collar while on a walk, hopefully the tag collar will stay with him.

Microchip. Microchips are great, but be aware that they only help if the dog is found and taken to a vet. Microchipping is very inexpensive, so it's worth the peace of mind.

Proper collar fit. Make sure your dog's collar can't be easily pulled over his head. If your dog constantly pulls, consider using a harness. (And please, no retractable leads.)

Prepare a lost dog sign. If your dog goes missing, you'll likely have little time to fuss with a sign. Prepare one in advance, and save the file to your phone and send it a family member or friend. Your sign can be simple. A brief description, date missing, contact information, and your dog's likeness. If your dog is a Greyhound, you can use a Greyhound silhouette instead of a photo. An example is shown below.

Contacts list. Make a list of contacts and join your neighborhood and community online forums. Email resources are invaluable, and homeowners have the best opportunities for sighting stray animals. Creating a list of local vets and animal shelters now will save you time when you have little time to spare.

Contact local rescue organization. Talk with your local rescue groups and find out how they are prepared to help you when your dog goes missing. Many organizations have a well organized support team ready to go, others may not. Use this information as you make your contacts list and as you assemble your lost dog kit.

Lost Dog Kit. Collect all the items you will need to respond if your dog goes missing. Items include:

- lost dog signs
- 1 gallon zip lock bags / plastic protective sleeves
- staple gun and staples
- utility knife
- transparent tape
- UV protected zip ties (10 to 12 inches long)
- maps
- contacts list



lost dog checklist



lost dog car bag

Once your dog goes missing you will want to spend as much time as possible at the site where the dog was lost and having these items ready will free you to be there. Some volunteers may show up to help but not have the tools needed, so you may want to include extra staple guns, zip ties, utility knives, tape and maps to get these volunteers going. You may find your local rescue organization is ready to jump in and provide some of these items.

Lost dog bag for your car. You'll never know when you can help with a lost dog search. Keep a spare collar, a leash, a bag of unopened treats, and for Greyhound folks, a turnout muzzle. Also, an extra pair of sneakers, blanket, and flashlight.

IF YOUR DOG GOES MISSING

Use Lost Dog Checklist to help get you organized.

Reach out. Reach out to everyone you know, and don't worry about the time of day. Your family and friends love you and will want to help. Immediately contact your rescue or adoption group.

Signs, signs, signs. Ask your friends to start posting your lost dog signs. Put your signs in plastic sleeves or zip lock bags and post them using a staple gun or zip ties. Use a map to identify a perimeter, and post them first to main cross-streets, then post them along side streets and alleys. Post them wherever there are sightings.

Spread the word via social networks. Use Facebook, and request that friends and friends of friends share your posts. Use Twitter and email. Take photos as people search and put up signs and include them in social media posts. Photos will help energize your followers. Email your neighborhood group and ask others to cross-post your message to other neighborhood groups. Attach your sign to all messages and emails. Get in touch with anyone who may have a media contact.

Contact Animal Control and rescue groups. Contact Animal Control, adoption groups and other breed rescue groups for help and ask them if they have access to traps or tracking experts. People who love animals will want to help.

Search with a dog. Ask people to take a dog with them when they search. If you're searching and don't have a dog, ask to borrow one. A dog will alert you to scents, cue you to sounds, and stick their heads into places you may not (like hedges). Also, the lost dog may pause instead of run if he sees you with another dog. Your dog partner may act to comfort the lost dog and will help protect you while you search.

Skittish dogs. Unfortunately, your dog may not allow himself to be caught. Greyhounds are notoriously skittish from the moment they go missing and may continue to run out of

fear. Some dogs go into survival mode. If this is the case, try to gain access to a live animal trap. Traps can be placed in the location of sightings, and a dog will likely enter the trap to reach food.

If you're a searcher of a skittish or survival mode dog, please abide by the owner's instructions. It's tempting to call after the lost dog, but that may drive them further away. If you sight a dog that's known to run, it's best to drop to the ground, phone the owner and try to keep the dog in your sights. These dogs may take days, weeks, or months to catch and their capture may require help from an expert.

Stay calm. When people call in sightings, stay calm and allow the caller to describe the dog. Sometimes people aren't really sure what they saw, so it's best to let them tell you what they remember. Try and get as much information as possible. Even if you receive a call for a dog that closely matches the description of the missing dog, continue to follow all leads.

Remain hopeful. It's very difficult to remain positive and hopeful, but remember that dogs are very resourceful. Dogs are smart. They will do what instinct tells them to do to stay safe and alive.

Links to additional info are below.

<http://www.petfinder.com/after-pet-adoption/find-lost-dog.html>

<http://www.missingpetpartnership.org/recovery-lostdog.php>

<http://www.fidofinder.com/find-your-lost-dog.php>

<http://forum.greytalk.com/index.php/forum/24-greyhound-amber-alert/>