

I have lost my dog. What should I do?

Answer from Canine Behavioural School and CLEAR Dog Training

Losing a dog is an emotional time, especially if s/he never returns. These suggestions will increase the likelihood of getting your pet back:

- 🕒 A dog that is sick or injured may often seek out a hiding place so, firstly, do a thorough search of your home, in cupboards, under the house, behind bushes and in the garden shed.
- 🕒 Next, check with your neighbours and the street where the dog was lost or last seen.
- 🕒 Call out to your dog and make a sound s/he will relate to food e.g. rattle a dinner dish, bang on a can or shake a container of favourite food or treats.
- 🕒 Set up a "sniff trail" by putting items of clothing you've worn along your fence line so that the dog can "smell home".
- 🕒 Call the vet clinics in the area. If your dog is taken to a vet, as sometimes happens after a car accident, they will try to identify it and contact the owner.
- 🕒 Some dogs are stolen from backyards, cars left outside a corner store or from where s/he has been tied to a railing. These unfortunate dogs have, if they are micro-chipped, a better chance of ultimately being reunited with their owners.
- 🕒 Check with your council to find out which dog pound services your area. Go there every day to check for yourself. Your description may not match the bedraggled dog s/he may have become by the time s/he reaches the pound.
- 🕒 Print "Lost Dog" notices, preferably with a photograph. Post these in a wide radius around the area; include shopping centre notice boards, local post offices, libraries, Laundromats, pet supply stores, veterinary offices and grocery stores.
- 🕒 Check out "found" sections of your local papers and consider placing a "lost pet" ad and offering a reward.
- 🕒 Make sure there is no "next time" once your dog is safely back home. Micro-chipping is excellent, but also always ensure that s/he **always** wears a collar with identity disk (name and telephone number).
- 🕒 Dogs registered with their local council have a much greater chance of being returned if caught by Animal Control Officers – and your fine will also probably be less if your dog is registered!
- 🕒 Practice obvious management techniques, especially for proven escape artists. Keep the front gate shut, build a higher fence and/or put chicken wire at the base to prevent your dog from digging his/her way out.

