



Lost Dogs & What To Do

Losing a dog is a scary experience, no matter how prepared you may be. Every situation is unique, but the following steps are what rescues and professional pet finders follow to make the process as smooth as possible.

Immediate Steps:

- 1.) **Stay calm, do not chase the dog!** Dogs that are in flight mode and do not know the area or their handler well will run when called or chased. Flight mode can last for 24-48 hrs and you want to mitigate the dog moving further from the area they were last seen. If you are following the dog, stay calm and keep them in sight as best you can but *do not chase or shout at the dog*.
- 2.) **Mark the location the dog was last lost and last spotted on a map.** You can open up a map app (Google Maps, Apple Maps) and screenshot your location and mark it on your phone. You can also use this to track sightings later, as many dogs tend to circle the same area when lost.
- 3.) **Immediately call a friend, family and/or the rescue/breeder the dog is from.** If you're on the ground actively searching, have a friend/family/rescue/breeder start the following action items;
 - a.) **Create a lost dog poster: Less information is BETTER.** Include a clear picture of the dog, a clear description, the area (not exact location) they were last spotted, and a number to send sightings and updates to. You can use this template to create a simple poster;
<https://www.postermywall.com/index.php/posterbuilder/copy/ed654edc409d0b20a6551808e4a0ac00>
 - b.) Have friends/family/the rescue share the poster on all forms of social media, **especially NextDoor and FaceBook!**
 - c.) If the dog got lost near home, have someone put their crate, food, and water inside the entrance of the home. Leave the front gates and doors open. You can place a familiar-smelling item (blanket, bed, etc) in front of the home to draw them in if they get close. Have someone posted at the home watching to keep the entry open and to see if the dog comes back. Many dogs find their way home on their own! These steps can help make that journey easier.
 - d.) Mitigate unfamiliar people searching for the dog. If people reach out wanting to help search the area, let them know that the best they can do is report sightings, not actively search. For many fearful dogs, search parties just push them further away from where they were lost. The best group to have on the ground canvassing the area are people who the dog is very familiar and comfortable with.
 - e.) Print lost dog posters and post them around the areas the dog was lost and last spotted. Unfamiliar people who want to help CAN help by posting posters!
 - f.) Make sure your dog's microchip is registered to your name and up to date with your contact information. If they end up being caught and taken to a vet or shelter, the staff will scan the chip and contact you!
- 4.) **If the dog has been circling the same area, plot a spot on the map on or near their route to post their owner (or the person most familiar with them) with food.** Ideally this is the person the dog will come to when they are finally hungry enough to approach a familiar human. Please note that every dog

is different, and some dogs will stay in flight mode for a few days before they are hungry enough to approach even a very familiar person.

Longer-term measures:

Some people want to immediately resort to traps, but this is never successful when the dog is in flight mode and not prioritizing hunger (they simply will not enter a trap to eat, and oftentimes the trap itself is novel and scary). Traps tend to enter the picture once the dog has been loose for several days or longer and is staying around the same area.

Public parks typically will not allow a trap to be set up on the property, and areas that do allow traps to be set require that someone be present to watch the trap when it's set out. It needs to be removed when no one is present to watch it. Other issues you run into are wild animals entering the trap or strangers messing with it, or even stealing it.

The best option may be to speak to someone with private property near or in the lost dog's area and ask if they would allow a trap to be set and maybe game cameras to be set up on their property.

Another option is to contact a professional searcher, who can assist in making these connections and who knows what the rules are in your area.

Example of a poster & map tracking:

MISSING DOG

DO NOT CALL OR CHASE IF SEEN!



MAGGIE
Breed : Mixed Breed
Color : Golden brown
Collar : Yellow

Last seen at Kezar Stadium entrance.

VERY SHY, DO NOT CHASE OR CALL DOG IF SEEN!

Contact number below with any sightings or information!

CALL OR TEXT WITH ANY INFORMATION

123-456-789

