



Found Pet Checklist

If you find a stray animal, remember: always think lost! It is easy to assume that found animals are abandoned or homeless, but they likely have guardians who are looking for them. A lost pet is depending on you to help them find their way home.

Check for Identification

Look for identification. A name/identification tag can lead you directly to the guardian. Rabies tags and shelter tags also have traceable numbers.

Scan for a Microchip

If there are no identification tags, take the pet to a veterinarian or shelter to scan for a microchip (this is a free service). If it is after hours, an emergency veterinary hospital will be able to assist. If there is a microchip, the company can trace the guardian and contact them to be reunited with their lost pet.

Contact Animal Control

Immediately contact the animal control agency in the area you found the pet and provide a detailed physical description along with the location and date that you found the animal. If the guardians call the shelter, the information will be on file to cross-reference. If you wish to foster and keep the pet out of the shelter until the guardian is found, inform the agency of your desire to do so – many agencies are agreeable to this.

Utilize the Internet and Social Media

The internet and social media are incredibly effective tools for lost pets. Beyond posting on your personal pages, post a “Found Pet” advertisement on community websites like [Nextdoor](#), [Craigslist](#), and “Lost & Found Pets of [city name]” Facebook groups. Someone in your community may know the pet and guardian. Some additional sites that may be useful to post on include [Fido Alert](#), [Petco Love Lost](#), [PawBoost](#), and [24PetConnect](#). In addition to posting, check these sites daily for “Lost Pet” posts from the guardians.

Create Posters and Flyers

Create a poster giving a physical description of the pet and distribute copies widely in your neighborhood. As you travel, look for community bulletin boards in shopping centers, libraries, churches, synagogues, or anywhere else you may post a notice of general interest. Additionally, place flyers on the streets at busy intersections (you may first want to check the legality of posting on public property). As you distribute the posters, remember to look for the flyer that the pet’s guardian may have posted.

Do NOT Rehome

If you cannot care for the pet, please contact your local municipal animal shelter to schedule an appointment for intake. If you would like to foster the animal you found, you are required to file a “found report” with the local municipal shelter, have the animal scanned for a microchip, and to make a concerted effort for 30 days to find the guardians before keeping, privately rehoming, or altering (spaying/neutering) them.

Animal Rescue Foundation

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