

Checklist for Lost Dogs



Lost dogs generally fall into two categories:

- 1) *friendly and/or cute dogs that are picked up by someone (often shortly after they go missing)*
- 2) *less friendly or skittish dogs that remain loose and can roam for a long period of time.*

Even if your dog appears to have vanished without a trace, it is very likely that s/he is still out there somewhere. Do not give up hope!

1. Physical Search

A. Search Inside

- If you are not sure that your dog is lost outside, then search the area they were last seen thoroughly.

B. Search the Surrounding Area

- Do a quick but thorough search of the immediate area (up to 1/4 miles in all directions) on foot. Searching on foot and driving are most effective in the first 48 hours after your dog goes missing.
- Get permission to search in any building that was open when your dog went missing, such as sheds, garages or basements. Keep in mind that dogs can hide or get trapped in some unusual places.
- If you must leave the area, then leave something that smells like you or your dog for him to find.

C. Search Dog

- If you are potentially interested in hiring a search dog team, then read this article so you know what to expect: lostpetresearch.com/resources/search-dogs/ . Less than 20% of lost dogs are found by a search dog.

2. Advertising

A. Posters :Creating and posting effective lost pet posters is one of the most important things you can do! (Pet detectives report a success of anywhere from 40-90% with well made posters)

- Check for any town bylaws stating where and how signs may be legally posted.
- Start with posters in the immediate area and up to 3 miles.
- Expand posters to 5-10 miles if there are no sightings.
- Include a reward if your dog is very friendly or a desirable purebred.
- Posters are easiest to read if placed where cars must slow down or stop.
- Your phone number and dog's picture must be large enough that they can be easily seen and read by someone sitting in a car or driving. Also include a very brief description of your dog and the date he went missing or was last seen.
- Do not put your dog's name on any flyers or posters **unless he is very friendly.**
- Get creative and attach posters to your car or use window markers and write a lost dog ad on your car.



B. Flyers: *Flyers should be hand-delivered or placed in locations where people walk. Flyers should not be used in place of posters where people are driving. This is the most frequent mistake that people make!*

- Hand out flyers in the immediate area and near any potential sightings.
- Post flyers at any local businesses, parks, pet supply stores, gas stations, and the library and post office.
- Visit local events and distribute flyers.
- There are companies that will mail postcards or send an automated phone message to everyone in the area your dog went missing. See: lostpetresearch.com/resources/amber-alerts/

C. Shelters, Rescue Groups and Social Media outlets

Locate **all** local shelters and rescue groups (try www.petfinder.com/animal-shelters-and-rescues/, And Facebook groups: Lost and Found Pets in Lincoln County and Surrounding Areas, Lost and Found Dogs North Carolina)

- Visit and provide a copy of your flyer. If you cannot visit, at least submit a lost pet report.
- Ask to see all dogs, including those not on the adoption floor. ***** VERY IMPORTANT*****
- Find out how long they hold new dogs before putting them up for adoption, and visit at least this often.
If you don't find your dog within one week, then expand to all shelters within 50 miles.

D. Microchip

- If your dog is microchipped, contact the company and inform them that your dog is missing.
Also make sure that your phone number and address on file are up-to-date.

E. Animal Control, Vets and Department of Public Works

- Contact your local Animal Control Officer and submit a lost dog report.
- Cars are a danger to any lost dog. Find out who in your town picks up deceased animals and if they check them for microchips/ID tags. This may be the Department of Public Works or Animal Control.
- Contact all local vets within 25 miles and your closest emergency vet and give them a copy of your flyer.
- Depending on your location, you may also want to contact these agencies in surrounding towns.

F. Post Lost Pet Ads

- Post online classifieds with local newspapers.
- Post online ads on craigslist in Pets and Lost & Found, and repost weekly.
- Post your dog on websites: www.lostmydoggie.com, www.helpinglostpets.com, www.fidofinder.com,
- Many local papers will post a small lost pet ad for free. However, a larger ad with photo is more effective.
- Post on social networking sites, such as Facebook. Also check for any "Community" pages for lost pets.
[Facebook: Lost and Found Pets in Lincoln County and Surrounding Areas, Lost & Found Dogs - North Carolina](#)
- Check online and in newspapers for any "found" or "for sale" ads that could be your dog.

3. Catching Your Dog : *These methods may be necessary if your dog is skittish or a newly-adopted rescue dog. However, it is not uncommon for a lost dog (even a normally friendly dog) to become very frightened when lost and even run from his owner.*

A. If You See Your Dog

- Do not chase your dog! Sometimes even approaching your dog slowly or calling his name can cause him to run.
- Some ways to calm a frightened dog: 1) do not stare at your dog or attempt to approach, 2) kneel down or sit facing away from your dog, 3) talk in your “indoor voice,” 4) yawn, 5) pretend to eat or crinkle a treat bag.

B. Checking Sightings

- Always have some of your dog’s favorite treats and a leash on-hand.
- If you get repeated sightings of your dog in an area, try sitting and reading a book for a few hours. Frightened dogs are more likely to approach a stationary person. This can also be done in the area your dog went missing.
- Leave out some items that smell like you or anyone with whom your dog is bonded.

C. Humane Traps

- Some very frightened or skittish dogs are easiest to capture in a humane trap or enclosure trap. You may be able to borrow one from your local shelter or animal control. Never use a trap that you think is too small.

D. Surveillance

- Trapping or feeding stations (i.e. food placed out for your lost dog) are more effective if used in conjunction with some form of surveillance, such as a trail camera. These are also very useful to help verify potential sightings.

Release of Liability: HATS accepts no liability for the consequences of any actions taken on the basis of information provided in this checklist. By reading and using this checklist, you are releasing HATS and the distributors of this plan from all liability and accepting full responsibility for the search for your lost dog.

This is only a very brief list of search actions. There is much more that you could be doing to find your lost dog! For professional help, contact Lost Pet Research & Recovery at (413) 539-3530 or <http://LostPetResearch.com>. Lost Pet Research & Recovery offers lost dog phone consultations Additional information on lost dog behavior is available from Missing Pet Partnership: <http://www.missingpetpartnership.org>.