

LOST DOG TIPS

Dogs can travel great distances in a short amount of time. Their behavior when they get out is mostly motivated by their breed but there are a few general behaviors I will go over and offer general tips to help you in your search.

Some dogs hit the ground running, so many things to smell but then they have an uh oh moment and will realize they are lost and will track themselves back home. This is why the very first thing you do for all lost dogs is to put an article of your clothing that is unwashed outside your home along with food and water. It is common for people to think a dog lost in a place it doesn't know is a more dangerous situation than one lost from home and that isn't true at all. A dog lost from a car accident, for example, will often return to the scene multiple times because it doesn't know where to go. Again, it's so important to leave your scent at the scene as close as is safe and even spend as much time as possible near the spot in case he does come back. Creating awareness of your lost dog is the priority !! Some dogs hit the ground running and just keep going but the majority will eventually settle in a place they feel safe. It doesn't take long for a dog to enter a state of mind called flight mode. There are many ways to catch them which I will go over but don't be shocked if you see your dog and he runs from you. This happens quite often. The very best thing to do is always carry a high value food with you (I like kfc chicken because of the strong smell) and sit or lay on the ground and be quiet !! He will have to get your scent and will come to you at that point, even if he initially runs, he should come back. Stay put and never, ever chase him. These are general tips. A tracker can help you with more breed specific help but these will work for any lost dog.

1- Contact local animal control and file a lost report. Also alert your local shelter and microchip company if applicable.

2- Put an article of unwashed clothing and food/water outside your home.

3-WALK !! Don't drive around your neighborhood. Dogs live life through their noses. You are leaving him your scent to follow home. If he has a best friend dog, take this one with you.

4- Create a post to share on social media and I'll explain exactly how to do it and why it's done this way. Go to YOUR PERSONAL page to create your post. Include your city and state (remember, this will be shared everywhere) and any phone numbers where people can reach you. Include a pic of your dog and ask people to click on that picture to be sure they're commenting on the original post and not a share. Now share this post to any local lost and found pages, neighborhood pages and any yard sale pages that will allow it. Also post to the nextdoor app and of course, ask your friends to share. Do not create any other posts. Multiple posts scatters information that could be critical in your search. You can easily find your one post and edit/ update it as often as you want. This will automatically update every single share and also every time you update or someone comments, it will automatically bump your post to the top of the pages you shared to. This keeps all info in one place and easily found by you.

5-Create a flyer. People don't read a lot of info so keep them simple. Lost in big print at the top, picture in the middle and phone number in big print at the bottom. Give these to your mail person, UPS/FEDEX drivers, school bus drivers and also give a stack along with rolls of tape to any local restaurants that deliver. Most of the time they will tape a flyer to their delivery orders. You can also tape these to immediate neighbors mailboxes (it's actually illegal to put them inside)

6- Create a small poster with cardboard and stakes or buy yard sale signs and cover with a flyer. Use something colorful to draw attention to them like a balloon or colorful string. Post these at neighborhood stop signs where people can't help but see them. Reality is that most people don't notice flyers stuck on light poles.

7- Follow up every sighting. Get out there as fast as you can and again, walk around. Very important to remember not to call out for your dog. Get on the ground if you see him. He's got to get your scent to give up. Always have smelly food with you and if you're able to, try to just sit in one place for a while. If your dog has been seen in this area multiple times but you can't catch him. Feed stations and cameras and possibly a trap may be needed. You can cut up an old item of clothes you've worn and leave pieces around to try to hold him in this area too. Often we will create feed stations with cameras on them. This trains him that he can find food here and will keep him coming back.

8-Physically go to the shelter every few days. Shelter personnel are very busy and the person who took your lost report may not immediately see your dog if he's brought in. It's always best to check in person.

9-Setting traps, if the need comes up, they should be done by a professional tracker or trapper. There is a very specific way to set them for the best success and no trap, ever should be left unattended. If you aren't watching it or have a live alert camera watching, CLOSE IT !! Animals can get seriously hurt in a trap, not to mention they are sitting ducks for predators.

10- When to call a tracker and the role we play. As soon as possible. Remember, the fresher the scent, the better the tracking results. Heat and wind are the biggest scent killer. Rain isn't as much of a problem unless it's a really hard rain. Many people think we will come out and find your lost pet but that doesn't usually happen. Dogs don't usually like strange dogs and especially when they are in flight mode. The search dog is just one of our tools we use and they help give direction for your search. No one but you or someone your dog loves should be involved in the search as it tightens up to actually seeing your dog. The search dog as well as strangers can potentially move your dog from a place it has set up in. Along with the tracking dog, I offer equipment, free of charge to clients with a signed rental agreement that you will take care of it. This includes still cameras, live alert cameras, traps and night vision binoculars. I also bring a few already made posters to get you started and a written plan for you to follow. I'm also available for your entire search to help answer any questions and to help guide you with your search. I have been through this with my son's lost dog and that is how I began my career helping other people with their lost pets. If you feel like hiring a tracker is not within your budget,

call us anyway. We are human and we are animal lovers. Even if we don't bring the dog out we will always help with advice.

I hope these tips help you if you're ever in this situation. I've been there and it's an awful thing to go through.

K9 Ruger went to private training in Stafford co VA and her trainer also helps train police and military dogs in that area. She graduated at a level four which is as high as they can go and also has a letter of recommendation. Radar is currently with a private trainer in Strasburg VA and will hopefully be graduating soon and join our team. His nose is a force !!

We sincerely hope you never need us but we are here if you do ! Much love, Lisa, Ron, K9 Ruger and Radar.

** final note- If your dog has a best friend dog, use him. He is your best weapon. A lost dog, even in flight mode will surrender to his best furry pal faster than any human. Walk that dog with you and leave his friend a scent trail. Bring him with you to sit near sightings. If you see your lost dog, you sit quietly and let the buddy dog do the work. Not only did this work for my son's dog, I've seen it work countless times over in my years as a tracker. One last trick if you don't have another dog to use is to play crying puppies on youtube on your phone as you're sitting down. Most dogs can't stand crying puppies and will come to investigate, upping your chances of him catching your scent and surrendering. Don't forget the smelly food, either !! Please remember, because of the distances that dogs can travel, you may have to start over at tip 1 in a new area. Please don't give up. Get some people to help you with things they can do like getting more flyers and posters made up. Dog searches can go on for weeks but persistence is the key to getting them back.