



STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU HAVE LOST YOUR INDOOR CAT

When your cat strays from home, it can be a traumatic experience for both of you. Here are some tips that we hope will help you find your cat.

*If you adopted the pet from **Main Line Animal Rescue**, please contact us first at 610-933-0606 or 610-337-9225. We will send out volunteers who can start helping to look, will send out a facebook alert to our followers, as well as sending a direct email to our volunteers with the information. Because the volunteers are bonded with and know the animals well, they can help predict how they might react to a certain situation.*

Be wary of pet-recovery scams. When talking to a stranger who claims to have found your pet, ask him to describe the pet thoroughly before you offer any information. If they do not include the identifying characteristic you left out of the advertisements, he may not really have your pet. Be particularly wary of people who insist that you give or wire them money for the return of your pet.

Never meet a stranger alone in a private place to retrieve your pet.

Search Your Home and Alert Neighbors

When indoor cats get out for the first time, they are scared and do not know what to do. Their first instinct is to find a place to hide. If they have ever escaped before they will run the same direction and go the same place they did before (even if it was years ago).

Cats will usually stay within a 3-4 house radius from where they went out as long as they can find a place to hide within that area. They look for the first place to hide and then they stay there (sometimes for days on end) as long as it is safe and dry. If they venture out, from their hiding spot, it is generally at night when there is less activity. They usually will only start to look for food/water after about 2-3 days. The longer they are out the more confidence they gain. The demeanor of your cat will play a big role in how they act when they get out. As a rule – males will tend to come out of hiding sooner and wander farther than females. Is your cat friendly to strangers that come into your house? If so, they may approach strangers outside after they have gained confidence.

As soon as you notice your cat is missing, talk to your family members or housemates and ask where and when they last saw your cat. Search your home carefully—under beds, in closets, dark places, small places, behind bulky furniture—in case your cat is hiding or sleeping somewhere.

If you are sure your cat is not in/around the home, take a slow ride or walk around your neighborhood. Bring along a recent photo of your cat and ask neighbors if they've seen him or her. Check under porches and shrubs and ask neighbors to check in sheds and garages in case your cat was accidentally locked in.

If you did not see the cat run out then make sure you check all hiding places inside your house. The cat might not be feeling well and is hiding.

Figure out which door the cat escaped from. Go out the door and look both directions. If you were a cat which way would you have wandered?

Are there objects that the cat can use as cover to make her way to a great hiding spot? Cats will not run out in the open (across a driveway, yard, or field) unless they are being chased by something (you, a dog, or a predator).

Best time to find a cat is once it is dark, using a flashlight to catch their eyes in the light. Softly call their name and shine the light under all decks and objects.

Cats operate on the sense of smell first (before sight). They can smell 1000 times better than us. If the cat has been with you for longer than a couple weeks they are bonded to your house and the smell of the house. Try to get as much of your scent outside so the cat can smell it and will stay in their hiding spot knowing that they are close to home. Shaking a food dish, treat jar or favorite toy will sometimes lure animals out of a hiding place. If they are outside, cook up something smelly on your grill, bacon or liverwurst; something that might bring your cat home for dinner!

Open the windows of your house and get the house smells outside. Put your blanket or article of clothing outside. Cut strips out of a sheet or towel and hang them outside the house. Put the litter box outside. Put canned cat food outside. Spread dry food around where you think the cat might be.

Put up posters and go door to door telling all of your neighbors to be on the lookout for the cat. Make sure they have a picture of the cat with your phone number on it.

Please note, we do not suggest having large groups of people out searching and calling for your lost pet. This will only scare your pet and drive them out of the area. People wanting to help can drive around and call the owner with any sightings, but never chase the cat or call out to it if it is not your own cat.

Work the Phones

Calls should be made to the local animal control agencies, veterinary hospitals, shelters (both municipal and private) and rescue groups in your area. One of them may already have your pet. Contact your local police department and alert them and find out if there is a shelter that has the animal control contract for your township. Notify the police if you have reason to believe that your pet was stolen.

Check in with shelters daily by phone and physically visit in person with photos of your pet to distribute to shelter staff. Sometimes the person answering the phone is not aware of a pet that arrived when they were not at the desk. This is very important.

Provide these agencies with an accurate description and a recent photograph of your pet. Ask if you can email the information over to them. Include the following information to shelters or the police (*Be cautious about what information you share in social media. When describing your pet, leave out one identifying characteristic and ask the person who finds your pet to describe it. **Never meet anyone privately who tells you that they have found your pet***):

1. Address where the pet was last seen
2. When the pet was last seen
3. Owners name and phone number
4. Pet's name, breed, color, sex
5. Was the pet wearing a collar, were there tags on the collar? Please describe
6. Is the pet microchipped and is the information current on the registration
7. Is your pet on any medications and what is the name of your vet?
8. Is your pet shy? Will he/she come to a stranger? Ask that they not approach the cat, but rather contact name/number on flyer immediately.

Advertise

Post notices at grocery stores, community centers, veterinary offices, traffic intersections, pet supply stores and other locations. Also, place advertisements in newspapers and with radio stations. Include your pet's sex, age, weight, breed, color and any special markings. *When describing your pet, leave out one identifying characteristic and ask the person who finds your pet to describe it.*

4. Try the Internet. These sites may be able to help you out:

- [Center for Lost Pets](#)
- [Craigslist](#)
- [Fido Finder](#)
- [Lost Dogs of America](#)
- [Lost Pet USA](#)
- [Missing Pet Partnership](#)
- [Fur Alert](#)
- Local facebook sites:
 - Bring the Lost Pets of Montgomery County Pennsylvania
 - BuxMont Lost & Found
 - Chester and Montgomery County Pet Search
 - Lost and Found Pets of Chester County
 - Lost and Found Pets of Chester and Delaware County

Social Media Networks

Send an email about your lost pet to local friends, colleagues and family members and ask them to pass on the information to anyone they can. Then, be sure to share the news with your social media networks. Most communities have local "Lost Pet" Facebook pages (see above) where they will post information about missing pets.

You can create your own Facebook page or digital card for your lost pet, and share it across your social networks—and ask friends and family to spread the word to their contacts. Please note on your Facebook post that you do not want people to post the location of any sightings on the Facebook feed. This information should be directly communicated to you, the owner. You do not want strangers rushing to that location and scaring your animal. In addition, you want to get this information as quickly as possible, so phone calls are best.

Create a “Lost Pet” Flyer

You’ll want to create a flyer that will stand out and get noticed by people who may have seen your pet. Repeated viewings of a consistent message are more likely to stick in people’s minds, so we recommend sticking with one design for your flyer. Some websites will make a flyer and fax to local vets and shelters. They will also do robo calls,

lostmykitty.com

findtoto.com

TabbyTracker.com

Pawboost.com

Start with a big, bold headline that people can read from a distance, like “LOST CAT” or “MISSING CAT.” Include a clearly printed, recent photo of your pet and list the breed, sex, coloring, age, weight, any distinguishing features, and when and where he or she was last seen. Provide your name and two phone numbers: yours and a friend or family member’s in case you cannot be reached.

Blanket the Neighborhood

Good places to post your flyers include dog parks and runs, pet supply stores and pet grooming shops and veterinary offices. Various commercial establishments like grocery and convenience stores, gas stations, Laundromats, bars, cafes and restaurants are other good high-traffic options.

Cover lampposts and trees near where you think your pet was lost, and around busy commercial and pedestrian sections of town. Put up flyers around schools or at kids’-eye level. Children can be more observant than adults, especially when it comes to animals.

Don’t Give Up!

This one is important! Remember that many lost animals have found their way back home. The more ways you try to locate your lost pet, the more likely you are to find him or her!