



## Search 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), and 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 0.2 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: <http://lostpetresearch.com/resources/search-dogs/>. Only 5%-15% of lost pets 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!** (80%-90% of lost pets are ultimately found with posters even when a search dog is used)

- 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.

**REWARD**



Large & Black - Last Seen July 4

**413-539-3530**

#### 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 your local 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: <http://lostpetresearch.com/resources/amber-alerts/>

#### C. Shelters and Rescue Groups

Locate all local shelters and rescue groups (try [www.petfinder.com/shelters.html](http://www.petfinder.com/shelters.html)).

- 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.
- 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.