



Please help find our dog!

You never think it's going to happen to you, but even the best pet owners have had a dog slip away from them. Normally, pets run away from acute boredom or loneliness, to answer sexual urges if they have not been spayed/neutered, in response to sudden and unexpected events that frighten them, out of curiosity if doors, windows or gates are left open, or if they are new to a home and are looking for their former surroundings. Bringing a new dog home changes the dynamic with pets already in the family. To help make the transition easier, add distractions, rotate toys, or put a chew bone into the diet on occasion.

What you should do NOW:

ID tags: You have just brought your new best friend home with you and it is an overwhelming and exciting time for you and your new dog! In all the hustle and bustle and preparations for the new dog's arrival, did you remember to get an identification tag? Skip the cutesy ones and make sure you get something that is going to stay with your dog and stay *readable* (steel or heavy plastic). We prefer the ones that slide onto the collar itself; we obtain our tags from www.collartags.com and they come with a lifetime guarantee. Whether you use this type, getting the information printed on the collar itself, or a hanging collar tag with a strong link, on the tag you want to include: two (2) telephone numbers with area code (make sure that at least one number has an answering machine or voice mail), and your street address including city and state. There are just too many cars and too much mobility these days. Your lost dog can be 30 miles away within 60 minutes, in the hands of a kind stranger who wants to return it. Make it easy for your dog to find its way back home!

Microchip: You should also make sure that the dog's microchip information is correct. The chip does the dog *no good* if it not properly registered.

Current picture(s): Keep copies of current digital photos of your dog. This will save lots of time later if you have to make posters/fliers.

Around the house: Make sure there are no gaps or cracks in your fencing and gates. Add hinges to the gates that make sure they close properly behind you. Make sure you have good doors and windows that close and lock properly and cannot be opened by pets.

What you should do THEN:

Where should we look?: Ok, you've already done a lot of looking and driving around. Let's take a deep breath, sit down, and think about this. How far a dog may run is just a function of how far their legs will carry them. Big strong dogs, especially young ones, can run 5 miles or more. Small dogs may be able to



go half a mile at most. Most dogs are recovered well within a 2 mile circle of their home, especially because they normally will never run for an extended length in a straight line no matter how strong or fast they are. If it is an outgoing dog, it will be looking for other dogs and for other humans who are friendly and likely to comfort, feed and shelter it. Neighbors' yards and public parks are spots it will like. If it is a shy or older pet and not trusting of strangers, it will hide. Bushes and under cars are good spots. Most likely, your pet will have tried to return home, but it will have failed. In a certain minority of cases, the dog has been in harm's way. A car or a predator will have gotten to it. Odds are much greater that someone has seen your pet and taken it in.

Put up signs: You will need to put up posters or fliers around your area. Think of your dog's age and fitness and decided how big an area you should canvas. Half a mile? One mile? Five miles? Make sure you include an appealing, current picture of your dog on the posters. If you do not have one, go online and use a search engine to find a picture that is similar to your dog. Do not worry that is someone else's dog; more than likely they will be happy that their picture is being used to help get another dog home! If you are in a bilingual community, put your sign in both languages. The major search engines on the internet translate your text immediately and for free. Your flier should include a detailed description of the missing dog, type and color of collar, where he/she was last seen, and a reward. Even if the reward is not much and some people will not accept it, it will still let people know that you are serious and encourage them to look and/or contact you.

You want to put the signs where the most people who either live, work, or regularly travel through the circle will have a chance to slow down and see them. Places to include are: major intersections controlled by traffic lights; entry and exit to parks; where all the school children get off the bus or are dropped off in the morning, so both parents and children can see them; entry and exit to grocery store; the local coffee spot. You have just added a thousand people to your search.

If you suspect that your dog has been stolen: If you suspect your dog or puppy has been stolen you should report it to the police. Also check the classified ads in your newspaper; if someone has stolen your dog they may be trying to sell it for profit.

Send out fliers: Go home. Open the yellow pages. You need to mail your small version to the groomers, vets, kennels, animal hospitals, animal shelters and pet stores in the area at least double the size of your circle. Don't be shy. While all of these places will notify the local animal shelter when a pet is found, you need to understand that animal shelters are under different city and county jurisdictions. They are, sadly, not unified. They do not share information. A pet store taking in a stray without a tag would have no way of knowing if that dog is 2 miles or 20 miles away from home. If they contact the animal shelter near them but far from you, your pet may be going to the wrong shelter in the wrong direction. Some shelters only hold a pet for 4 days, then give it out for adoption or destroy it.

Contact the microchip company: Many of the microchip companies network with vet offices and shelters, can send out a dog amber alert, and some even offer insurance to cover any injuries that your pet may get as a result of being lost.



Go online: Get on craigslist.org and check out posting for found dogs and post a “lost dog” message so that people can contact you if your dog is seen or found.

Post on Facebook! Your local friends can be on the look-out and there are pages, such as “LOST DOGS” and “K-9 Amber Alert,” that are dedicated solely to helping reunite owners with lost pets.

Many shelters are also online and maintain lists of found pets. Some have photos of lost pets, so look over the ones in a huge circle from your home.

Check your local newspaper online classified listings to see if anyone has posted a found dog.

Contact us!: RIAR is dedicated to our orphans **FOR LIFE!** Let us know if, heaven forbid, one of our orphans got away from you; we are not here to judge, and we want the opportunity to help get one of our fur-babies back home and safe. We can post on our Facebook, website, as well as network with other rescues and Akita-specific rescues as well. Now you’ve just added most of the east-coast to your search!!

At this point you have done all that you can. Sit back and try to relax. Go about your normal routine – this is not to help your dog so much as help you. The calmer you are to more you can stay focused and productive.

As part of checking with the local animal shelter, you should consider checking the list they maintain of dead animals they have picked up. It may sound like a grim exercise, but every time you do it and do not find your pet, your hope has reason to continue. The substantial majority of lost pets are not on that list. The odds are in your favor. If your pet has passed on, you and those who care for you need to know.

Now it is time for you to wait patiently and continue your normal life. Most people get that call that someone has found their dog.

