



FOUND DOG GUIDE

“Think LOST not STRAY”

AT FIRST SIGHT

Don't assume that this is a stray dog, more than likely it is just lost and lives close by

Time is critical, some lost dogs are excited to be free and may move on very quickly

If you have time, you or someone else should grab some delicious food and a slip lead or piece of rope

Consider the safety of the dog and yourself. A frightened and possibly sick or injured dog may behave unpredictably. A sudden move may spook him, causing him to bolt into traffic or even attack you.

OBSERVE THE DOG

If the dog looks or acts threatening in any way, or if for any reason you feel uneasy about the situation, stay away from him or her and notify local animal control authorities. If the dog appears approachable, remember to use caution and common sense. Encourage the dog to trust you and come closer by speaking softly and offering food.

Dogs with skittish temperaments or who run from strangers, especially when lost, are often mistaken as having been "abused." In reality, many of these dogs are pampered pets who have exhibited fearful behavior since puppyhood. They are genetically predisposed to being skittish and their behavior has nothing to do with how they have been treated.

ACTION

If you get close enough to capture the dog, you still stand the risk of being bitten. Even a small dog can inflict a painful wound, and if a dog whose vaccination status is unknown bites you, you will be advised to undergo expensive and painful preventative treatment for rabies.

When approaching the dog, speak calmly and reassuringly to him. It may help a great deal to approach sideways and not seem threatening or “grabby”..also try not to make direct eye contact, but instead glance down and to the side as you interact.

Try tossing food first, to gain his interest and trust, and then gradually add a gentle placement of the lead over his neck. It's easier to slip a loop over a dog's neck than to grab a collar first and try to attach a clip. Also loose dogs may have no collar at all.

DON'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS

A dog's appearance can be deceptive when determining how the dog was treated before you found it. A loose, lost dog will lose weight, become dehydrated, obtain injuries, become matted, and pick up ticks, fleas, and burs in their fur.

Never assume that the dog you found was dumped, abandoned, or homeless until you have concrete evidence or until all efforts to find an owner/guardian have failed

Assume, no matter how the dog behaves or what it looks like, that this dog is owned and loved by someone who wants the dog back.

ONCE YOU HAVE CAUGHT THE DOG

GREAT JOB ! Now take a DEEP Breath for your sake and the dogs so that the dog can begin to relax after being caught by a stranger. Try to relax and don't say or do too much right away.

Make sure that he doesn't have any injuries.

Check the dog for ID tags or tattoos. Tattoos are often found inside the ear or on the inner legs.

Keep the same loop over his neck while you get a longer leash (and secure collar) on the dog.

While you have the dog on a leash, try to encourage the dog to “go home”

Encourage him to move forward, hopefully back to his home!

Unfortunately, some people do allow their dog to roam off leash and it is possible that you found a dog that knows exactly where its home is. See if the dog will lead you to its' home.

You can lure a stray into a fenced in area, into your car, garage or home and then try to figure out what to do next.

If you pass by any people, ask them if they know who owns that dog.

Don't release the dog to ANYONE until you are positive that you have found his or her rightful family!

As you walk with the dog, look around and notice if there are any Flyers posted in the area where you found the dog.

ONCE YOU HAVE THE DOG IN YOUR HOME

Secure the dog in a safe area either outside with safe fencing, in your garage or in a room in your home. Don't place the dog with other dogs in your care until he is medically safe and his temperament with other dogs and people has been evaluated. Frightened dogs need time to adjust before you can evaluate them properly.

Offer the dog some water and perhaps some food in small amounts, a little at a time. Dogs that have been on the run are dehydrated and starving. They should not eat or drink too rapidly.

Take the dog to a vet's office and/or an animal shelter and have it scanned for a microchip. Microchips are tiny computer chips containing identification information that are injected under the skin of pets to provide permanent, positive identification. Most vets and animal shelters are equipped with various types of scanners for microchips.

Check the "lost & found" ads in the local paper, and place a "found dog" ad yourself. Remember to check the "lost" ads periodically, as well as local lost pet websites. Even if the description given doesn't perfectly fit the dog you've found, call anyway. You'd be surprised how many pet owners, shelter workers, and individuals who find lost pets and place "found" dog ads get the breed wrong!

FOSTERING THE DOG IN YOUR HOME

If you are not willing to take the dog to the shelter, most shelters will allow you to foster (house) the dog while also filing a “found report” by providing the description, the location where you found it, and your contact information.

If you decide to foster your found dog, remember to create a FOUND DOG flyer to mail or take to the shelter so they can post it on a bulletin board. Then if the owner/guardian shows up at the shelter searching for his or her dog, the shelter can put the family directly in touch with you.

Finally, take a photo (digital if possible) of the dog and make up some smaller (8 1/2 X 11) black & white "FOUND DOG" flyers with a partial description of the dog, the location where you found the dog, and your contact information. Leave off certain details so all callers will be forced to identify the dog. Deliver these to rescue groups, vet offices, and pet supply stores in your area. Remember that large pet supply chains as well as groomers, vets and private petshops have bulletin boards where you can place your flyer

Remember to send out info to all your yahoo groups and contacts on your internet address book if they live in your area.

Post a giant FOUND DOG poster near the exact spot where you found the dog and a couple more at major intersections in that area. Go to our Flyer Tips for content and suggestions.

Consider NOT placing a photo of your lost dog. Simply list basic info like small, shaggy, breed and that's it. Expect the caller to fill in the details of his or her appearance, weight or markings. We live in challenging times where unfortunately some people might describe a lost dog based on your photo only. This could be an attempt to take the dog from you when it was not their dog and perhaps even resell it or offer it up for the unthinkable like dog fighting!

Check the area for any "LOST DOG" posters, but understand that the dog might have traveled quite far and the posters could be one mile away or more. Also consider that the dog may have escaped in the last few hours and the posters haven't gone up yet.

Maybe the dog's owner is disabled and unable to create and hang posters. Just because there is no poster, don't automatically assume that there is no owner! Chances are there is an owner who desperately wants his or her companion home.

Be sure to check back in the area and within a one-mile radius for "LOST DOG" posters for up to seven days after you found the dog. Different circumstances (health problems, being out of town, etc.) can prevent people from posting lost pet flyers immediately.

WHEN PEOPLE CALL TO CLAIM THE DOG

Don't be too descriptive. When someone calls you, insist that they tell YOU what their dog looks like. Do not answer any questions pertaining to the description of the dog. Let them do the talking. You want to be sure that they really have the right dog and aren't making a crank call. Let them tell you any unique features or identifying marks on the dog.. If the dog is licensed and/or micro chipped, then ask him or her to bring proof of that or photographs of the dog when you meet.

If the caller has no paperwork or photos to prove that the dog is his, ask him or her to meet you at the veterinarian's office that would be able to verify ownership.

Never meet someone alone, be sure to take a second person with you and make sure to meet in a public location, or perhaps choose a police station, or a vets office. Let someone at home know exactly where you will be going.

TOWN SHELTERS

By law, you are required to turn found dogs over to local authorities (town animal shelter) where their owner/guardian will be able to claim them. Sadly, very few municipal shelters have the resources available to house lost and stray animals more than three days. One of the main reasons that lost dogs are not reunited with their families is that people who find dogs are hesitant to take the dog to a shelter for fear it will be euthanized. However it is the **FIRST PLACE** that a person who has lost a dog will contact.