

Lost Cat Manual

Instructions how to find your lost pet – FAST!

International Pet Detectives, LLC

Introduction

When a cat goes missing it is an emergency. If you follow the steps in this plan, you have the best chances possible of locating your lost pet. This is meant to be a guide, but use common sense and any and all resources available to you! Feel free to skim this guide and use the sections necessary in your case. However, if you don't get results right away, go back in the manual and make sure you have done EVERY SINGLE recommendation and not skipped anything!

Many people ask us where their cat will be found, if it will be close to home or far away. After SIX YEARS working to find lost cats we can tell you this – there is NO PATTERN. Indoor only cats have been found blocks from home. Outdoor access pets have been found inside hiding in drawers or opened crawl spaces after missing for a week! Friendly animals are found hiding while shy pets are picked-up by rescuers. That is why – you MUST cover ALL of your bases! There are some general guidelines, but don't rule any possibility out.

Key:

 - Tasks that can be assigned to friends, family, neighbors or paid help.

CASE EXAMPLES: Specific real-life cases to illustrate the recommendations.

NOTES: Items of particular interest in your lost cat search.

YOU MUST READ THIS – We would put these items in flashing lights if we could, because this is CRITICAL to getting your pet back!

If you need more help in your search, consider hiring a professional Pet Detective. We offer one hour phone consultations for \$150 given by two highly renowned Pet Detectives. Call us at 800-925-2410 for more information. We can also provide other services, such as Fur and DNA Analysis, contacting the media, finding Pet Detectives near you, in-person searches (in a limited area) and more.

One thing that prevents many pet owners from finding their pet is common myths. They make assumptions about their pet and where it will be found. Here are some common myths – take a look and see if one of these might be preventing you from conducting a complete and thorough search for your lost pet.

Common Myths:

My pet will come home.	Some pets do come home, but cars, fences, busy streets and well-meaning rescuers get in their way. In addition, if a pet is displaced out of their known territory they might not be able to find their way back home safely. Even if a pet starts off in the right direction, roads do not always continue in that same direction. Pets are more likely to return home if you live in a rural area with less traffic. A study done by a veterinarian found that only 8% of lost pets return home on their own!
My pet will come when I call.	Being lost is a traumatic event. Just like a person, they can suffer from shock after an accident. Many pet owners depend on a well-trained pet's recall to find the lost pet. Generally, this tactic is a waste of time. You shouldn't depend on your pet's recall – no matter how perfect. In addition, people's voices sound alike, especially from a distance. Our smell, however, is more individual than our fingerprint. Read on to find out ways to tap into this fact to help get your pet back!
My pet is microchipped – the shelter, a vet or rescuer will contact me.	A microchip is a great line of defense in protecting a pet. It is not a guarantee. There are many problems with the process of getting a pet scanned for a microchip. First, we find that many people do not even know about microchips, or have a false idea about how microchips work. Second, people do not have the time or resources to get to a vet or shelter to scan the pet. Third, the microchip scanning equipment can be faulty, low on batteries or improperly used. Sometimes microchips will “migrate,” moving from between your pet's shoulders to another area of their body where it is not usually scanned. Fourth, just because a microchip is located it doesn't mean that the person with that information will use it correctly. They could decide not to contact the microchip company because they want to keep your pet!
My pet would never cross a busy street.	Of course, in your pet's normal routine they would not cross a dangerous street. However, being lost is a traumatic event and pets do act in unusual ways. In addition, if a stray dog or predator was chasing your pet, they would run in whatever direction is the safest at that time. In addition, frightened pets act erratically, crossing streets multiple times.
Someone stole my pet.	It is true that more pets are being stolen, especially highly desirable pets like puppies. However, most pets actually get away from home on their own and are rescued by someone who loves animals or wants a pet. Some people end up keeping the pets, selling them or giving them away. Be very careful calling your pet “Stolen” or “Abducted.” This can be a disastrous error in a lost pet case, even if the pet was stolen.
I have done everything possible to find my pet.	Most pet owners start their search in the common ways: hanging flyers, checking shelters, etc. However, even if it seems like you are covering all of your bases, there are other things that need to be done. Just keep on reading!
I wasn't called about my pet, so they weren't found by the shelter.	The majority of shelters do not have the staff or resources to call every owner when their pet is found, especially if the pet was found deceased. In addition, collars are easily removed or can slip off.

<p>The local shelter has pictures online – I can just look for my lost pet by looking at the pictures.</p>	<p>Checking and rechecking for lost pets in person while networking with staff members is the most effective way to promote awareness of your lost pet at a shelter. Most shelters workers are overworked and underpaid, working long hours at a job that can be emotionally devastating. They do the best they can, but pets can get overlooked. Data entry errors are easy to make. Just think how easy it is to mark a black cat white, or a female cat male!</p>
<p>My pet is always inside so they would never get lost.</p>	<p>If you are reading this book, than you know that this myth isn't true! Earthquakes, fires, floods, accidents, careless visitors, and home invasions open windows and doors for cats to escape!</p>
<p>My pet could be strangled if their collar gets stuck on a fence.</p>	<p>This is the number one reason pet owners decide not to put a collar with tags on their pet. This myth is partially true – some pets do injure themselves when their collars get stuck. However, this is a small risk relative to the huge risk of a pet being lost. In addition to break-away collars, there are new, safer identification products on the market that virtually eliminate this possibility.</p>
<p>My pet will never get lost.</p>	<p>The world-wide annual statistics on missing pets are shocking. Over 10 million pets go missing every year and millions never make it back home. That translates into 1 out of every 3 pets are lost! Pets are lost all of the time, and to think that your pet isn't going to be one of them is unrealistic.</p>

Chapter 1 – FAST Search

If Your Pet Is Lost Or Missing:

1. Stay calm and take immediate action! Generally, only a very small number of pets return home on their own. This is an EMERGENCY. Ask for help from friends, family and professionals.
2. Lost and distracted, your pet may behave in uncharacteristic ways, including not coming when called.
3. It is impossible to determine which action is going to be the one that gets your pet back, so you have to cover all of your bases and do each one. However, each lost pet case is different and requires special actions.

If you just discovered that your pet is missing, IMMEDIATELY conduct a FAST Search:

F – Fast – Get going immediately!

A – Act With A Plan – Take action! Follow the step- by-step plan below.

S – Search – Start searching at home & continue away from where your pet was lost.

T – Time – Spend time communicating with volunteers asking for help, duplicating your phone number, getting a color picture of your pet and thoroughly searching possible hiding places for your pet. Save your time by handing out your phone number to people but not pausing to give lengthy descriptions of your pet and what happened.

1. **Close all exits.** If your pet just disappeared from home, make sure you close all possible exits until you are able to search your home completely. Many pets are found in hiding places right under a pet owner’s nose.
2. **Ask for help.** Quickly call anyone who might be able to help you begin your search. Call your husband or wife, partner, friend, neighbor or other person who might be available and sympathetic to your situation. Look for this symbol, “🏠” to help determine which tasks you can delegate to friends and family who are willing to help.
3. **Search your home and yard.** Check your home and do it quickly! If your pet went missing from home, it is important to completely search the inside and exterior of your house. Use the check-list below to make sure you checked in all possible hiding places. Of course, if you saw your pet run away or if your pet was lost from a location away from home you can skip this step. While searching for your pet at your home it may be necessary to remove all objects from hiding places, for example, emptying closets or drawers. 🏠

NOTE: In addition to searching for your pet, you are looking for clues. Be aware of the following clues: fur indicating that a pet is hiding in a specific location or traveled a certain path, paw prints that possibly belong to your pet, fur indicating that your pet was in a fight or attacked, paw prints indicating the presence of other animals, and scat or excrement indicating the presence of other animals or your pet. 🐾

Use this list to make sure you check all possible hiding places in your home:

Location	Checked?
Under Sofas, Chairs, Beds and Other Furniture	
Behind & Inside Appliances	
In Drawers, Cabinets & Closets	
Basement, Under House & Deck	
Attic	
New Construction	
Garage, Sheds, Barns	
Rafters	
Roof, Chimney	
Grills	
Pools, Pool Filter, Hot Tub, Hot Tub Filter	
Between Fences	
Laundry Baskets	
Inside Cars & RVs (Engine, Roof & Interior)	
Inside Boats	
Inside Feed Bins	
Under Cars	
Inside ANY holes in walls, ceilings, roofs, floors, etc.	
Favorite Hiding Places	

Case Example: One lost cat was actually stuck in a hole in the floor of a closet for **TWO WEEKS**. He did not make any noise when called. The cat finally was found when the owner conducted a complete search of his home. The cat was located in the floor in the back of a closet where the owner didn't even know there was a hole. He survived!

Case Example: Another cat was lost for **SEVEN DAYS** inside of a shed. She did not make a sound at all. She was finally located when her owner's dog kept scratching at the door to the shed and she opened it to see the friendly outdoor cat. She survived!

- Picture of your pet.** Find a color picture of your pet. The ideal picture will clearly show your pet's coloring, size, tail and body shape. If your pet's picture is on your computer, in your camera or on your camera phone take the necessary steps to print out the picture. If you absolutely do not have a picture of your pet, you can easily find a picture on the internet. The easiest way is to go to: www.google.com and click on "Images." Type in a description of your cat. For example, "Orange Tabby Cat," or "Siamese." View the pictures and select a

picture that looks identical to your pet. You should do this if the only picture you have of your pet is when your pet was a puppy or kitten. 📄

5. **Contact information.** Think about what contact information to provide possible witnesses. This is an important decision, and one most pet owners don't consider adequately. Make sure that the phone number you provide will be answered at all times, day and night. The message on the phone number you provide should be changed to indicate that you have lost your pet. Therefore, it is best not to provide a work phone number that is only checked during work hours and cannot have a lost pet message for callers to hear or a home phone number that is only checked at night. Usually it is ideal to give a private cell phone number. If your pet was lost in an area different than your cell phone area code, it is best to either get an 800 number or obtain a new cell with a local phone number. Some people do not have access to long distance, so it is best to provide an easy, free way for a person to contact you. However, make sure you use the full phone number including area code incase someone is from out of the area and does not know the local area code. If you do not have a personal cell phone or pager, do not hesitate to borrow or buy one. Change the message on the phone. Say something like, "If you are calling about my lost cat, please leave your name and number, time and location cat was seen and I will call you back. There is a reward." This can help eliminate some prank calls too.
6. **Supplies.** Once you have decided on a phone number, write it on post-it notes, print it out on rough-draft flyers, or use business cards. You will also need a street map of your area. You can buy one at most gas stations or drug stores, print one from online websites such as mapquest.com or borrow one from a neighbor. Make sure you have some paper and a pen to take notes and mark on the map. 📄
7. **Get going.** With the color picture of your cat and copies of your phone number, head out the door on foot. Start knocking on doors around your house, asking if anyone saw your pet. First, cover at least three houses in each direction. Make sure to physically search back yards! Many lost cats are found right next door. The search needs to include all small hiding places. If the people you contact have seen your pet you will need to ask which direction your cat was traveling, the exact time they saw your pet, and where exactly the pet was walking (on street, sidewalk or in grass.) If they did not see your pet, leave them with your phone number and continue with your search. Do not pause to talk. Again, this is an emergency. As with your search at home, you are looking for clues, especially fur. 📄

Case Example: Magic, a lost black cat was found in her next door neighbor's yard! She was missing for 3 days and was hiding out very close to home. Another cat was found next door, but had passed away from old age. Without a complete search of the neighbor's yards the owner could have gone off frantically!

Use this list to check all possible hiding places in your neighbor's yard:

Location	Checked?
Basement, Under House & Deck	
New Construction	
Garage, Sheds, Barns	
Rafters	

Roof, Chimney	
Grills	
Pools, Pool Filter, Hot Tub, Hot Tub Filter	
Between Fences	
Inside Cars & RVs (Engine, Roof & Interior)	
Inside Boats	
Inside Feed Bins	
Under Cars	
Inside ANY holes in walls, ceilings, roofs, floors, etc.	
Favorite Hiding Places	

8. **Keep going.** Next, slowly walk around your neighborhood. Do not run frantically, as you could be moving too quickly to actually see or hear a cat. Stop anyone you see and ask if they saw your pet. It is easiest to do this with a helper, as two sets of eyes are better than one. Look in alleys, under cars, etc. Make sure you talk to the mailperson, package delivery, church goers, school guards, police, construction workers, gardeners, street crew, etc. Again, if they did not see your pet yet, leave them your phone number and continue with your search. If someone did see your pet, obtain the detailed information covered above. When conducting this level of search it is important to methodically cover the area. Use the map and a pen to track where you walked, and in what order and at what time. If you were able to get volunteers, the best search pattern is to divide up the area in four zones: north-east, north-west, south-east and south-west. Assign each volunteer a zone. Then, within that zone they would walk up and down each street, starting near the location where the pet went missing and moving away. If you do not have volunteers, then start with a grid method, walking around blocks starting at the location where the pet went missing and moving away. For lost cats cover at least 500 – 1000 feet in each direction. 📍

9. **Re-group.** If you did not have any success with your physical or foot search, it is time to re-group. Consider the time of day at this point. If it is getting late it might be necessary to prioritize going to the store, calling people to ask for help before it gets too late, or contacting the Animal Shelter before they close. Depending on the time and if you have help prioritize the next tasks as necessary.

These are the first steps to an effective search. If you found your pet, congratulations! Please skip ahead to the final chapter: “When You Find Your Pet.” If you have not found your pet yet, there is still hope! Please read on and follow the next directions.

Chapter 2 – Supplies & Regroup

If you did not have any success with your physical or foot search, it is time to re-group and prepare to continue on. The next steps are outlined in Chapter 2 and 3.

1. **Shopping.** You will need to go shopping at a couple of different types of stores. See below for your shopping list. These stores are:

Type of Store	Examples	Supplies	Priority
Mega Store	Wal-mart K-mart	Poster Supplies Flyer Supplies Bait	HIGH
Office Supply Store	Office Max Office Depot	Poster Supplies Flyer Supplies Duplication Services	HIGH
Hardware Store	Home Depot Ace	Poster Hanging Supplies Humane Traps	MODERATE
Feed Store	Feed & Tack	Humane Traps	LOW – Outdoor access cats (cats that are allowed outside even for short periods of time) HIGH – Indoor only cats (cats who are never allowed outside)
Drug Store / Grocery Store	Albertsons Ralphs Krogers Vons	Poster Supplies Flyer Supplies Bait Poster Hanging Supplies	HIGH

For Cats: Make 10-50 posters. If your cat just went missing, start with 10. If your cat has been missing for a few days, start with 30. If you do not find your cat, then increase the number of posters until you have reached 50. Save your receipts – you can return the supplies you don't use. Find directions and pictures below.

Shopping List:

- Neon or Florescent GIANT (usually 28" x 22") Poster Board (Quantity: Usually 10-50 sheets.)
- Clear Packing Tape (Quantity: One roll per 25 posters.)
- Thick Permanent Marker (Quantity: 2 Minimum. Suggested: Avery Marks-A-Lot Permanent Marker # 657159, UPC 071709241384, or marker with a 1" tip. Do not buy Sharpie marker products, especially Item 15101 Chisel Tip Industrial Strength markers in a yellow and black packaging. SKU 071641151017 or ANY marker with a metal barrel. These smell awful and will give you a headache.)
- Heavy Duty Staple Gun (Quantity: 1 Gun and Staples for each person helping.)
- Sheet Protectors (Quantity: Enough for each neon poster, usually 10-50.)
- Duct Tape (Quantity: One roll for each person helping hang posters.)

- Zip Ties or Tie Wraps at least 10” long – Found in Automotive Section (Quantity: 20-40 tie wraps.)
- Wooden Stakes usually at 3 ft tall by 1” wide. (Quantity: Usually 10-30 stakes.)



Giant Neon Poster Board



Heavy Duty Duct Tape



GIANT Permanent Markers



Clear Packing Tape



Hammers



Staple Gun & Refills



Clear Sheet Protectors

2. **Shelter Check.** For lost cats it is less likely that your pet will be found in a shelter, but it is possible! It is important that you check all shelters in-person the first 2 to 3 weeks and then do “on-line” checking when possible. Be aware that in most areas the shelters have very limited hours or are closed on strange days. For example, one shelter is closed on Sundays and Mondays, and is only open from 10am to 5pm. It can be agonizing to wait three days to find out if the shelter picked-up your pet! Call and get their operating hours and go as soon as you can. Make sure that you have the right shelter. In larger cities there are multiple shelters that cover small areas. Research shelters in surrounding areas and visit those too. Generally, for lost cats you can just check online pictures as it is a much lower probability of finding your lost cat in a shelter. In over 6 years of experience, ONE time we found a lost cat in a shelter – and yet the shelters are full of cats. Remember: Cover your bases! We suggest checking all shelters within at least a 25 mile radius at first, and here is why: 📌


Issues that impact which shelter a pet is taken to:

- The exact location where a pet is picked-up. Sometimes an animal can be picked-up right down the street from one shelter, but under another shelter’s jurisdiction.
- If your cat is wearing a license, it could be returned to the issuing agency location.
- If the shelter is at capacity your pet could be taken to another shelter.
- If another shelter has a higher adoption rate, the animal could be transferred from a high-kill shelter to the more successful animal shelter.
- If your pet was picked-up by a rescuer, they usually bring the pet to the shelter that is closest to their home or at a location they are familiar with.
- If your pet was picked-up by an experienced rescuer, they may take your pet to a shelter with the highest adoption rate, the best facilities or a vet on staff. They might even lie about where they found the animal so that the pet can get into a better shelter.

Some people rely on shelter employees to find and return their lost cat. However, there are a few good reasons why that is not a good idea.

Reasons NOT to count on shelter workers to return your lost pet:

- Someone may feel that your care is not the absolute best care for the lost pet. This could mean that even if you are the rightful owner of a pet that any "errors or unknowns" (i.e. the pet got sick for any reason) may cause someone finding your pet not to act in your favor.
- An employee may get bribed. Either someone wants your pet or someone has enough money and lack of integrity to “adopt” out your pet.
- There are so many lost pets arriving at kennels. Employees are bombarded with information and cases at all times. Sometimes there are few options for them – and often it does come down to a simple issue: Give this pet to this rescue or adoptive family versus euthanize the animal. They make the best choices they possibly can most of the time.
- If a pet is sick or injured (even slightly) they usually are not allowed to post the pet’s picture on the internet. One shelter director said that pictures of injured pets “...should never end-up online.” Yet, many people only check online and not in person.

3. **Copies.** You will need to get a couple of items duplicated at a copy store. Sometimes copy stores are able to take your order and process the copies immediately while you wait. Others must process your order over night. It is worth making some calls around town to find the lowest prices and quickest turn-around time. You can also use an office supply store to get your copies at. You will need color copies of your pet's picture enlarged to fit an 8 ½ x 11 paper and flyers. Make sure the picture is focused on your pet and doesn't show too much else. In other words, focus the picture on the missing pet, not your cute child or great backyard! (Quantity: Enough for one picture for each of the neon posters, usually 10-50.) You will also need flyer copies. See Chapter 3 – “Actions That Get Results” for complete directions and quantities. 

After you have obtained all the necessary supplies and checked with the shelter it is time to put the supplies to good use. Follow the next chapters to get results!

Chapter 3 – Actions That Get Results

The following tasks are CRITICAL and have the highest success rates. Again, remember: Cover all of your bases!

1. **Posters.** No matter how your pet was lost or even if your cat was possibly stolen, it is critical to make and use posters. To quote Karin Goin of Pet Detectives, Inc., “If you do one thing, do posters and do them well. When in doubt, POSTER.” There are many variations on this idea. In the end, you need to use the resources you have and make posters that are easy for you. For example, if you don’t have a printer you should use paint or permanent markers for the text. If your handwriting isn’t clear, then you should print out the text for the posters. If you physically cannot make posters, get the supplies or have the time to make them you can hire a sign company to make them for you, but it can be expensive. You can locate a sign company online or in your local phone book. It is worth the time to look into the laws about posting signs in your area. In some areas they will fine you for the posters or make you take them down. However, there are always way to get around such issues. One client contacted the Chief of Police, another promised to take them down after 7 days. Recently one client was able to get a permit to hang the signs for free, but she had to visit City Hall and wait 45 minutes to obtain the paperwork and approval. Sometimes it is easier to “Beg forgiveness than ask for permission!” Selecting the locations to post your signs is critical. Poster should first be in your area, at the ends of your street where everyone drives. Second, posters should be hung at a 500 foot radius (that means at intersections about 500 feet from the place your cat escaped in all directions). If you don’t get results with posters at a 500 foot radius, increase to a 1000 foot radius. Finally, in some cases you might have to go to a 1 mile radius.



IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING TO LOOK FOR YOUR PET, MAKE POSTERS.
This is the one, most effective, simple tool that gets pets back fast. Florescent posters are highly visible, effective, and they are harder for people to tear down. Your goal with these posters is to make them very big, very noticeable, and very brief.

Most Common Mistakes on Posters:

- Using 8 ½ x 11 flyers, not posters, and hanging them so people cannot read them.
- Not using permanent markers but using pencils, pens or thin markers. People driving by will not be able to read them unless you use large print!
- The pet’s picture isn’t in color or accurate – it is the wrong color, not a full-body picture, etc. If you do not have a good picture of your pet that is accurate, please go online and search images for a picture that looks like your pet. Try google.com or petfinder.com or msn.com If you are not good on the computer, ask a friend for help. This is important! You will also need a picture of your pet for other techniques in this guide.
- Not making at least a few bilingual posters. In many areas there are populations that do not read English. We HIGHLY suggest making at least some posters in Spanish or other languages. You can go to freetranslation.com for more languages and words.

Here are some commonly used terms translated into Spanish:

- Recompensa para la informacion y el regreso seguro (Reward for information and safe return)
- Gato (Cat) / Gatito (Kitten)
- Perdido (Lost)
- Recompensa (Reward) / Dinero (Money)

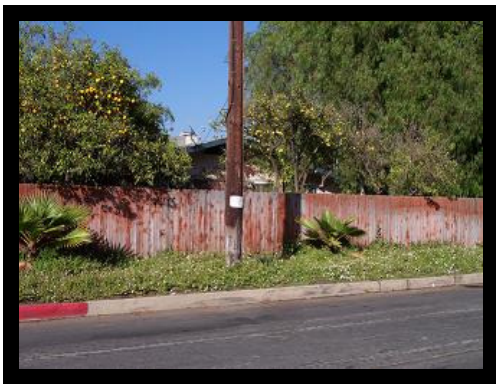
Lost Cat Poster Directions:

Use the giant (28" X 22") florescent poster board you purchased. The size and florescent color will attract the eye of everyone who drives by. You will hang this vertical, not horizontal. At the very top, in 5-inch black letters, print the words \$1,000 REWARD (or whatever SPECIFIC reward amount you decide on.) At the very bottom, in 5-inch black letters, print the words LOST CAT. Right above "Lost Cat" write your phone number in the same big letters. In the center of the poster, use clear packing tape to secure a plastic sheet protector with your pet's color picture inside. (Or tape a laminated color picture of your pet to the poster.) It can be helpful to include ONE or TWO descriptive words about your pet. KEEP THIS TO A MINIMUM. For example, if your cat is black, put LOST BLACK CAT. If your cat is an exotic breed with hard to describe markings, just keep it LOST CAT. It is entirely up to you if you feel comfortable posting the word "Reward" or a specific reward amount.

NOTE: The debate on offering a specific reward amount is the topic of many lost pet websites. Some think that including a specific reward amount in ads, on flyers and posters only encourage scam artists or would-be thieves. In the end, you should decide for yourself what you think it appropriate. Most of our clients feel that the highest priority is getting their pet back - no matter the cost. In addition, some pets can be sold for hundreds of dollars, and pet owners want to make it more lucrative to just return the pet home versus finding a possible buyer. One thing you should know: If my pet were lost, I would post a large reward without any further thought. I would rather deal with a couple of prank calls or would-be scammers than not get my pet back. Usually most people decline the reward when returning a lost cat. All of the arguments aside, it does do one critical thing: It gets people's attention.

NOTE: To decide on a reward amount, consider your budget, the area where your pet was lost, and the resale price of your pet. Look in the "Lost and Found" section of your local paper and see what other people are posting for rewards. Usually for a lost cat we suggest \$250 - \$500. If you do not post a specific amount, most people will assume that the reward is under \$100.

NO

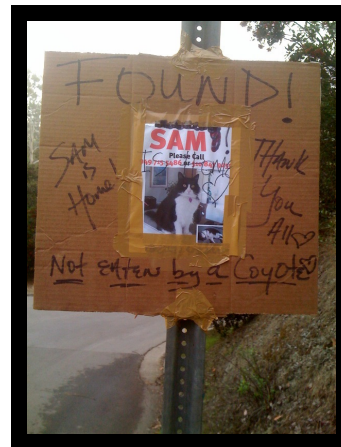


These are FLYERS, not POSTERS. Your signs need to be visible from a car. Take the extra time to make your signs easy to read and sturdy!

BETTER.....



Do not hang flyers or posters that people can't read. Do not use pencils, pens or thin markers to create flyers or posters. Posters incorrectly hung can curl and fall down. Flyers with small pet pictures and too much information miss an opportunity to convey critical information. Make sure your phone number is in BIG NUMBERS and you include a specific reward amount! Most people that see "reward" assume it is \$50 - \$100... not enough for them to be late for work or turn around to get your number off the poster.



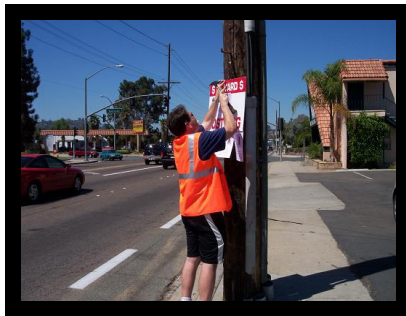
Use what space and resources you have. Pictures above on the left is a banner placed on a garage door and on the right is a "Poor man's poster" made of free cardboard. Both are great options that use free supplies to make LARGE signs which are effective in finding a lost pet. For the sign on the right, everyone in neighborhood kept telling this woman that her cat was taken by a coyote. This causes a lot of people to stop searching.

Hanging Posters & Signs



Hanging the posters: After you make effective posters, they must be hung so they will stay up as long as possible. The easiest way to hang a poster is using a staple gun and staples or a hammer and nails and attaching the posters to telephone polls or wooden freeway on and off ramp signs.

You can also use twist ties or zip ties to hang posters on chain link fences. In some areas consider wooden stakes, hammering them into the ground and then stapling and taping the poster to the stake. Make sure you don't put the posters near water sprinklers or damage personal property. One poster is great, three or four is better! Use the duct tape to hang posters on poles. However, in many areas they will be removed by city workers. Make sure you know about local rules before hanging the posters. You can also use this tape method to reinforce posters on telephone poles, especially in semi-windy areas.





See how far away you can see the poster! Can you find the flyer in the picture?



“Triple Postering” is a method created by Karin Goin. In this technique you hang **THREE** posters in a row on a busy street. See how noticeable the multiple posters are?

Variations – BE CREATIVE! Remember – Big, Bold, Obnoxious!

If it rains in an area and you print out words on the computer, you must cover the paper with clear packing tape as the print will fade and bleed when wet!!! Consider some of these variations if it is raining or windy in your area.



These posters were created by Pet Detective Jim Berns. They are made out of plywood, particle board or similar wood products – even scrap lumber. Most hardware stores will cut the wood too! You can use a drill and make holes at the top of the board and use common twine or string to tie the sign around utility poles. These are great signs for areas without wooden telephone poles.

Below is a 5 x 7 tarp with lettering done in yellow duct tape.





These posters are made by “tiling” an image and printing out sections on a regular printer or at a copy shop and then taping the pieces together. The image on the left is made of 4 legal sized copies, the image on the right is made from six “regular” 8.5 x 11 sized copies. Most copy stores can help you do this if you bring them an original or regular sized image. Some copy shops do have the capability of enlarging images or flyers to poster size; it just depends on the shop’s equipment. **HOWEVER**, keep in mind that these images will bleed or run in the rain! So, they must be laminated or put into clear sheet protectors!

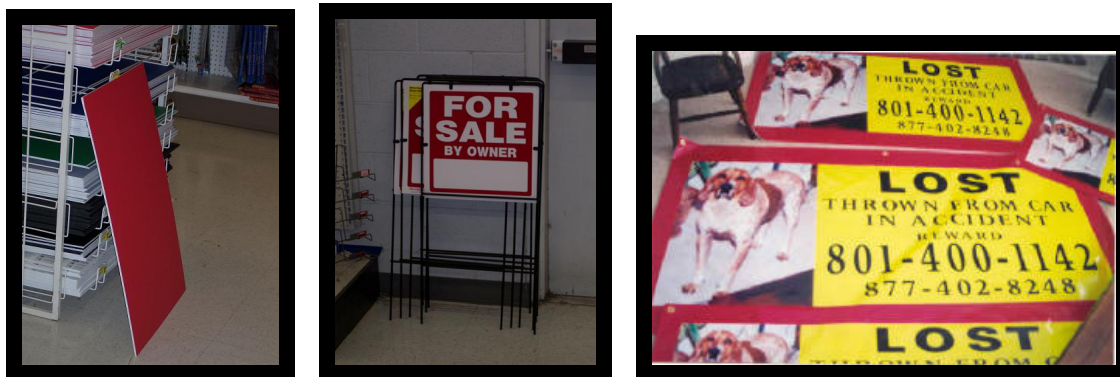
This is a great option if you have free access to a copy machine, and the poster board is out of your budget. The pictures show copies taped to wood board, but you could also attach the copies to cardboard obtained for free from most grocery stores. Just ask for empty boxes and use a knife or scissors to cut into the desired size. Also use cardboard behind “regular” neon posters for reinforcement in high wind or rain areas.



For some people budget isn’t an issue. Consider renting a giant billboard on a busy freeway. The billboard on the left was actually donated as the lost dog was from a local fire department. The one on the right was in Palm Springs. If your pet was lost in a more rural area, this is a great way to get the word out, and it might get you some free media coverage too! If renting a billboard is out of your budget, you can also approach local land-owners along the freeway. Sometimes they will let you build a small billboard for free or for a much lower amount.



Here are two options for low-budget billboards and banners. The image on the left is a billboard made on a sheet of plywood. The image on the right is actually 7 regular sized neon poster boards. Each board has 1-2 letters made by using the permanent black markers. You could also use permanent paint or spray paint.



There are many other types of materials you can use. One option is “foam core,” pictured here. If you cannot take time off from work, sign companies can make posters on a variety of materials, and even banners. Use pre-made sign stands, such as For Sale signs. Tape your poster to the frame – one on each side! Or, park your car at a busy intersection and drape the banner on your car during rush hour for maximum impact! This is a must in areas where they take signs down.

NOTE: You must check your posters regularly. If they are falling down or being torn down, you must replace them and look into the reason they are coming down. Again, please check with local officials to see about sign laws in your area. Ask about local permits. Also, you can staple a few of your small flyers below your giant posters so people can quickly take one.

- Flyers.** Flyers are more effective in lost cat searches versus other types of lost pets. Many of the same mistakes are made when making flyers that are made when using posters, including not using an accurate picture of your cat and not including a specific reward amount. 8.5 x 11 sized flyers are fine, but it is not a convenient size. Smaller flyers are easier to carry in your pockets while handing them out and are more convenient for people to keep with them. They are also excellent for placing on car windshields. There are a couple of different formats you can use for the flyers. It is suggested that you make your flyers in full color on white paper. People are visual, and they like to see a picture of the pet in color. If you use colored paper it changes the coloring of the photograph. (Quantities: Start with 50-100 flyers. This actually only means 6-50 copies. On average, expect to make around 300 flyers for your lost cat search.) To start, distribute the flyers first within a 500 – 1000 foot radius from where your cat went missing from. If no results, expand up to 1 mile. 📄

FLYERS ARE FOR HANDING OUT DOOR-TO-DOOR AND TO INDIVIDUALS. THEY ARE NOT FOR POSTING ON TELEPHONE POLLS.

Most Common Mistakes on Flyers:

- Do NOT include the words “stolen,” “abducted,” or “taken.” People do not want to get involved in theft cases!

- Do NOT include your address! You do not want some stranger or scam artist showing up at your home.
- Including threats of medical conditions that are not true. Most people know that it isn't true when they see "Cat has heart condition" on a flyer. If you claim that your pet has an injury or illness, include it on the flyer but also include symptoms you can see with the naked eye. For example, "Cat is old and incontinent and will urinate everywhere." Or "Cat has hip problems and will limp. Requires surgery."
- Including ALL identifiable characteristics. Please leave at least ONE detail about your pet OFF of your flyer. This will help you when calls come in to identify if a caller saw your pet or is a prank or calling on another cat. For example, leave off the flyer that your pet's tail is tipped in white, or that your cat has a scar on its back leg.

Use the following guide to determine how many flyers to start with:

Pet Species	Indoor Vs. Outdoor	Time Missing	Number of Flyers
Cat	Indoor	Less than 1 day	50
Cat	Outdoor	Less than 1 day	100
Cat	Indoor	1-2 days	100
Cat	Outdoor	1-2 days	200
Cat	Indoor	3+ days	300
Cat	Outdoor	3+ days	500

Lost Cat Flyer Directions:

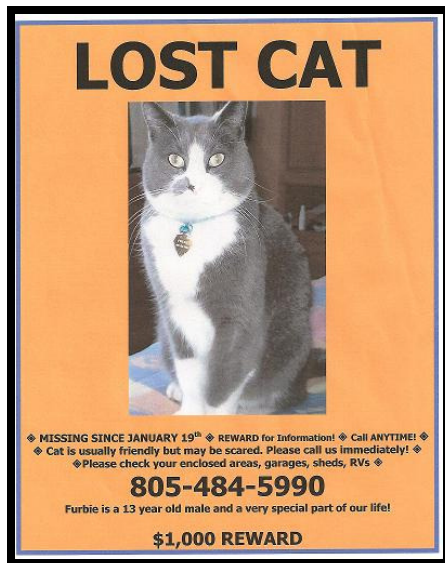
On your computer in a word processing program, enter in all of the information below using the details of your lost pet case. Play around with the font and background colors until you have a finished product that is attention-getting. Print out a final copy. Take this to a copy store. Ask them to help you by reducing the size of the flyer. They use the terms “tile” or “panel” to describe this process. Feel free to bring this document to show them what you want! You can either have them make two flyers per sheet of paper, four flyers per sheet of paper or even eight flyers on one sheet of paper! If you do not know how to use a computer or word processing program you can ask someone to help you, or even make it by hand. There are many differing opinions about the information to include in a flyer. Honestly, most of the details are unimportant. Very rarely do these details really influence if you get your pet back or not. The most important elements are basic information clearly stated and easy to read.

The majority of pet owners include additional information such as the location the pet was lost, a physical description of the lost pet and the pet’s name. Most people think that pets do not travel far from home. This is far from the truth – lost cats can travel. Therefore, if you include the location where a pet was lost they might not think that a cat a mile away could be the lost pet. Sometimes it is recommended by rescue groups that you should include comments requesting calls even months after a pet goes missing, for example, “Please call even if you see a black dog in two months.” However, if your pet is still missing and at large after such a long time, there are other tactics that you can follow that are much more effective than hoping that a witness will keep or remember a flyer they looked at months before. Most people will not keep your flyer for that long.

Case Example: Buzz went missing from home in Pacific Beach, California. Buzz, an outdoor cat didn’t have ID on when he never came home. Two weeks later Buzz was found – FIVE MILES from home! We suspect that he got into a car possibly by climbing into an open window. But, we will never know. Buzz is safe at home – with ID tags on!

NOTE: It is very important to exclude at least one identifying mark or characteristic of your lost pet. That way you can use it to confirm that a witness saw your pet or that a caller actually has your beloved pet and isn’t making a mean prank call or trying to get the reward without actually having your lost pet.

NOTE: Just like with the giant posters, it is important to include bilingual information on flyers. Some clients chose to make two separate flyers, one in English and one in the other language, such as Spanish. Other clients make a 2-sided flyer with one side for each language. Or, a flyer could be developed that includes both languages.



Computer Flyer Sample – Before Tiling



Handmade Flyer Sample – Before Tiling

Information to Include on Flyer (In order from top to bottom.):

- \$1000 REWARD – If you cannot afford a large reward amount, at least include the words CASH REWARD. The ideal reward amounts are between \$250-\$500 for cats. This should be the largest writing on the flyer at the top. If you have doubts about including a specific reward, please read the section on Posters first.
- Color Picture – A picture from the side is best, but use what you have. Look online to see if you can find a better picture. Make the picture as large as possible.
- Optional: Heart Strings Comment – Include a short comment that makes people feel for you in your search. For example, Cat is my best friend, I am devastated, Children crying, etc. This should be in small font.
- Optional: CALL ANYTIME! Also in small font.
- Date Missing. For example, Lost 10/13, Missing June 21. Small font.
- Optional: REWARD FOR INFORMATION Also in a small font. The reason we include this comment is incase someone sees your pet but can't catch it, we still want them to call! Of course, do not give a reward until you have your pet. Many calls are FALSE LEADS and are not your pet.
- Optional: No questions asked. You can include this comment if you would like. It is suggested to include this comment if your pet is a purebred, exotic, cute, a kitten, or was possibly stolen.
- Optional: Special Pet Information: This information depends on your specific case. For example: "Cat is scared and hiding. Please do not chase!" or "Do not try to chase cat. Please call us!" "Cat is friendly but shy. Do not approach." You should include information if your pet is shy or skittish. Most possible witnesses would assume that your pet is friendly and would come to them if called, and might even attempt to chase your pet in order to catch the at large pet. This is the worst way to approach an animal, and can do more harm than good. In these cases it can help to point out your pet's temperament or request "Please do not try to approach my pet because they are shy. Please call me right away!" or "Cat may be frightened and may appear feral." If your pet is shy or is an indoor only cat, it is

also suggested to include a statement such as, “My pet is probably hiding. Please search your property for any hiding places.”

- Bilingual Information – In many areas there are populations that do not read English. We **HIGHLY** suggest including Spanish or other languages on your flyer. You can include the information here, or make the flyer double sided with one side in English and the other in Spanish. Both sides do not need to be in color. You can go to freetranslation.com for more languages and words. Please see the section above on posters for common lost cat words in Spanish.
- Phone Number – Make sure the number is a local phone number if possible. The number should be answered at all times if possible. If you do not have a local phone number consider getting a new cell phone in the area, or borrowing one from a friend. This should be in medium to large font.
- LOST CAT – Include color if it is obvious. For example, LOST BLACK CAT, LOST GRAY CAT, LOST WHITE KITTEN. Do not include uncommon breeds, breeds with long names, mixed breeds or confusing descriptions. For example, LOST SEAL POINT SIAMESE. This should be in a large font, similar to the size used for the \$1000 REWARD.

NO



Do not hang flyers! Flyers are for handing out to people. Make them easy to read and in color. Large flyers are unwieldy, and people don't want to carry them around or put them in their pocket.

YES



Make sure the critical information is written in a big, bold font. REWARD and LOST PET is the information you are trying to convey quickly! This is an example of a Double Panel Flyer. In other words, there are 2 flyers printed on each 8.5x11 sheet of paper and cut in half. Each flyer is 8.5x5.5.

Better yet...



These are Quarter Panel Flyers. The original flyer was tiled, making four smaller images on an 8.5x11 sheet of paper. In other words, there are 4 flyers printed on each 8.5x11 sheet of paper and cut in quarters. Each flyer is the size of a postcard, or 4.25x5.5. The colored background grabs your attention too. A specific reward amount is better than putting "REWARD."



This is an example of a Business Card Sized Flyer. In other words, there are 8 flyers printed on each 8.5x11 sheet of paper and cut apart. Each flyer is about 2.75x4. Again, this flyer could have a bright background instead of white. Also, it a specific reward amount is suggested.

Additional Ideas:

- Hand out flyers at schools, malls, and busy street corners.
- Pay flyer delivery services to hand out your flyers. Contact them first before copying your flyers as sometimes they have great copy deals.
- Use door knob flyers.
- Use tape to hang flyer on door knobs, fences, gates or garage doors.
- Put flyers on car windows at churches, grocery stores, shopping malls, parks, etc.
- Draw hearts or money signs in different colors on your flyer to change the look.
- Use post-it notes.



Examples of Color Post-It Notes

Examples of Door Knob Flyers

Here is a partial list of locations to distribute the flyers to:

On Car Windshields On Streets & At Stores
Door-To-Door

Hand Out To Pedestrians At Busy Locations
Hand Out To Kids At Local Schools
Hand Out To Kids At Local Busy Events
Hand Out To People At Sporting Events
Hand Out To People At Shopping Malls
Hand Out To People At Farmer's Markets
Local Businesses To Post on Bulletin Boards Or In Windows
Vet Offices

3. Door-to-door interviews & physical search. For some reason, many people are uncomfortable actually talking to their neighbors and asking to search their neighbor's property. However, with a lost cat it is critical. Unfortunately, you cannot trust your neighbor to search their own property – especially if that means crawling under a deck, or walking in the mud! 🐾

How to conduct door-to-door interviews and physical searches:

- Ask a friend or family member to go with you.
- Organize supplies, including canned tuna, a towel, gloves, flashlight, a notebook, pen and flyers.
- Start knocking on every single door. This includes apartment complexes.
- Introduce yourself and give the person a flyer.
- Ask them:

- Have you smelled any foul odors coming from possible hiding places such as in crawl spaces, under decks or in sheds?
- Have you found fur or remains? It may be upsetting, but I would like to know.
- Have you heard any meowing?
- Have you heard any cat or dog fights?
- Have you seen any loose or stray dogs or cats in the area?
- Do you feed your pets or stray animals outside? My cat may be feeding there too!
- Do you know if anyone went on vacation on or around the time my cat went missing? Possibly they are hiding there and the people are gone?
- Are there any empty or abandoned properties? That would be a quiet place to hide.
- Did anything unusual at all happen around the day my cat went missing?
- Do you know anyone who takes care of stray pets in the area?
- Did you have anyone at your home the day my cat went missing? They may have seen something!

- Ask them if you can look around the outside of the property with your flashlight and call for your cat.
- Walk around the outside of the property, REALLY LOOKING in all hiding places. Review the list of places to look from Chapter 1 if you are unsure. Also, remember you are looking for clues too, including fur and paw prints!
- If you don't find anything, move on. Make a note in your notebook about when you searched, the address and who you spoke with. Note anything, such as: "great hiding places," or "has lots of cats." This information might be useful later and helps track what areas you have covered searching.

Now, if you go to a house and no one is home or you are uncomfortable searching, you have to leave some information for the person when they return. Here is an example of a letter to leave, along with your flyer.

“Dear Neighbor-

I need your help!

My cat _____ went missing on _____ ! My cat is friendly, but timid and no doubt frightened so it probably will not come to you. My cat could also be hiding in silence. This is known as the silence factor. This is when a frightened cat instinctively hides from predators in silence, including humans. It is often impossible for a human to see or hear a cat hiding, even if they are only a few feet away.

I am searching everywhere to find my lost pet. I need your permission to let me come onto your property and search the outside perimeter. Please call me when you are home and I can come by.

If you do not want me to enter your property to search for my cat, please call me so I know you received this note and that you are searching yourself. Even if you have a dog or another pet, please look closely.

If you have any questions you can call me at _____.

To give us permission to search the perimeter of your property, please sign below and leave this form on your front porch or gate. To expedite the search process, please leave any gates unlocked.

In addition, please let me know if:

- You have smelled any foul odors coming from possible hiding places such as in crawl spaces, under decks or in sheds. Also, please let me know if you found any fur or remains. It may be upsetting, but I would like to know.
- You have heard any meowing.
- You have heard any cat or dog fights.
- You have seen any loose or stray dogs or cats in the area.
- You feed your pets or stray animals outside. My cat may be feeding there too!
- You had anyone at your home the day my cat when missing. They may have seen something!
- You know if anyone went on vacation on or around the time my cat went missing.
- You know of any empty or abandoned properties where my cat could be hiding.
- You know of something unusual that happened around the day my cat went missing.
- You know of someone in the area who takes care of stray pets.

There is a reward for any information leading to the recovery of my cat. If you do see my cat, please call me immediately.

Date

Signature

Address

Phone Number”

4. **Humane trapping.** A humane trap (also called a live animal trap or a Have-A-Heart trap) is an animal trap designed to contain an animal without injuring the animal. It is basically a wire cage, with the door held open by means of a catch. Food is placed beyond a trip plate to lure an animal inside. When the animal steps on the trip plate, it releases the catch, which causes the door to drop down behind the animal, enclosing the animal inside. 🐾

NOTE: Humane trapping is VERY EFFECTIVE when searching for a lost cat, especially an indoor only cat. It is hard to imagine that your cat isn't coming to you, but it happens every day. This is a MUST for any lost indoor only cat cases, and many outdoor access cases too!

While humane traps do not injure, they still may frighten the trapped animal. The trap that you want is the one with the quietest mechanism. Please remember that it can take weeks to successfully trap a pet. Don't give up! Traps are available for purchase online, at hardware stores, pet supply stores, feed stores, and sometimes are available for loan or rent at animal shelters. Additionally there are lost pet organizations that help monitor traps. In some communities, renting a trap for a week equals the cost of a brand new trap. If that is the case, buy your own so that you do not prematurely stop trapping after only a week simply because the rental bill keeps increasing. Trapping for a single week is a relatively short period of time considering that many owners trap for several weeks before being reunited with their pet. Make sure the trap that you rent or buy is the right size for your pet and that you can easily set the trap on your own. If the trap is too small (or the animal is large in relation to the trap) the door may drop down on top of its back, rather than closing properly. The animal could simply back out of the trap if it isn't the right size. Traps come in a variety of sizes from mouse to cougar. Make sure you are going to be able to place the food at the rear of the trap! Some new traps are made too long so you can't reach the back of the trap easily. The easiest option is to get a trap with a "back door." Make sure your trap is set BEFORE dusk every night, if possible around the same time.

Humane Trapping Directions:

If possible get two humane traps. Having two allows you to place a trap in two areas of a neighbor's property at the same time and reduces the time and any inconvenience that trapping may cause. If you live in a rural area with multiple locations that your kitty might be hiding, having two traps enables you to cover twice as much territory in the same amount of time.

Get permission from neighbors to trap and print out a map of the neighborhood from www.maps.google.com

- Note on your map areas where there have been positive sightings and where you have seen cat hairs, paw prints, or poop.
- Note on your map areas attractive to your cat: heavy brush, decks, sheds, basement crawl spaces, open garages the day your pet disappeared, etc.
- Note on your map areas your pet would avoid (or possibly become victim to): any resident pets (particularly dogs), any areas where predators have been seen, high

walls and chain link fences, construction or unusual activity the day your pet disappeared, etc.

- Note the names and addresses of neighbors from whom you've obtained permission to trap.
- Unless your trap is brand new, hose off the trap before using. Hose it off each time you trap a critter to remove any other animal smells.

Set the trap with about a 1/4 cup of sardines and hot rice on something unbreakable like a paper plate or disposable containers. Place the dish beyond the trip plate. Get a piece of cardboard, place it underneath the trap, then dribble SMALL bits of food on it so that the food trail leads into the trap, then straight to the dish of food. By using cardboard, the trail of food does not leave a stinky mess when you are trapping, and it also lets you control where and when you want to bait (if you put the main lure in the trap, but there are multiple areas of the yard with old dribble scents, it might confuse your pet). Provide a bowl of water in warm weather. Place something that smells like you near the opening of the trap if your pet is bonded to humans. Try spraying the trap itself and the surrounding area with calming [Feliway](#)

If the trap is visible from the street, padlock it securely to a fixed object so that it doesn't get stolen. Some people recommend covering the top and sides with a towel, while leaving the front and back end open, and making sure towel does not interfere with release mechanism. The theory is that if the cat can SEE through the trap, it thinks it can get clear passage (like through a tunnel) and is not so wary. Some people think a cat would feel safer with a completely unimpeded view and leave the trap uncovered. If your cat is the type that enjoys jumping in a cardboard box and just sits there, it may prefer concealment. If your cat is generally uncomfortable in enclosed spaces, leave the trap uncovered. Rather than putting cardboard UNDER the trap, some people prefer covering the INSIDE floor of the trap with newspaper, grass, or nearby dirt (test it first to be sure it doesn't interfere with the door mechanism); this is for the cat that shies away from stepping on the metal wires. Practice setting the trap inside your house and familiarize yourself with the different mechanisms. When you set it for real outside you want to be as quiet and unobtrusive as possible. Set the trap before you go to bed and try to pick up the trap as early as convenient to reduce any trauma this might cause to a trapped animal.

NOTE: What you use to bait the trap is very important. The smellier the better — something that smells so wonderful that your kitty will move out from its hiding place to eat, even if a couple houses away. Some expert trappers recommend Kentucky Fried Chicken Strips or bacon. We like to use sardines and hot rice. This is because the hot food will "waft" out and lure your cat in to the trap.

If you repeatedly trap raccoons or opossums, try providing food nearby (not in trap) that a raccoon or opossum might like, but that your cat would NOT like. Use sweet fruit, grains, marshmallows, or nuts. If wildlife fill up on fruit and grain first, they may be less likely to eat the cat food and trip the trap unnecessarily. If ants are a problem, spray the ground with unscented ant spray. Often people are concerned about traps attracting other animals that might hurt their cat. We have never heard of predators coming to a food dish to get

the cats, but it could happen. But the risk is minimal compared to the risk of having the cat being outside.

Test your trap to be sure you have set it correctly, or adjust the sensitivity of the release mechanism to respond to less pressure. Sometimes small animals are able to get the food because they are too light to trip the trap or they simply hop over the trip plate. Some very savvy animals poke their paws over the trip plate (or through the wires) and scoop up the food. If this is the case, use freshly cooked bacon (or roast beef or chicken) and clip it directly to the trip plate with a clothespin — the animal will trip the plate just by nibbling.

If you know the location of your cat, but it simply refuses to enter the trap, follow the method that feral cat rescuers use: before actually setting the trap, put out food at a regular time and place; provide food next to a disabled trap, door secured open, so that your cat will show up regularly for food and become used to the presence of the trap. Every day, place the food gradually closer and closer to the trap, until your cat must enter the trap in order to eat. After they have successfully entered the trap to eat, set the trap for real the next day at the usual mealtime. If your cat still balks at entering the trap, withhold food one day, and then trap the next day. The extra hunger will probably be enough to overcome the wariness.

If you need help trapping your pet you can look in the phone book under pest control and contact someone who says they deal with feral cats. Usually they supply the traps and charge a daily rate. Make sure that they know to release any other animals captured! If you do not direct them they may kill the animal, remove it from the area or turn the animal into animal control where they will kill the animal!

Trap Resources:

<http://www.animal-care.com/info.com>
www.ebay.com
<http://www.wildlife-traps.com/cats.html>
<http://www.animal-traps.com/humaneway.html>
www.amazon.com

Alternative traps, such as drop traps:

www.alleycat.org (search “drop trap”)
<http://www.alleycat.org/droptrap.html>
<http://www.droptrapdesign.blogspot.com/>

Places to look for feral rescue groups:

<http://www.alleycat.org/orgs.html>
<http://worldanimal.net/wan.htm>
<http://www.h4ha.org>
<http://www.netpets.org/cats/catresc.html>

There may also be an e-mail list for rescue folk in your area or state. You can try searching at

<http://groups.yahoo.com>
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/feral_cats



Humane Trapping Supplies



Kitty Cat Safely Inside Humane Trap



Examples of hidden Humane traps: Next to a building, In a bush & In a wood pile.

- Maps.** How could a map help find your lost pet? Well, if you have done everything listed here and you aren't having any luck, there is a reason. One possible reason is because you have excluded areas that are actually in your search area that should be addressed. For example, many pet owners do not search on the other side of a busy street or on a freeway because they think their pet would not go in that direction. So, check out these map resources. Print or buy a map and study it carefully. See if there are ANY areas you have not covered. If your cat has been missing for more than 3 days, you should look 1000 feet in EVERY DIRECTION. Use the map as a key and mark on it any sightings, where you searched and where you used other techniques in this Lost Cat Manual. 📍

Map Resources:

www.yahoo.com	www.maps.google.com
www.trulia.com	www.maps.live.com
www.mapquest.com	www.zillow.com

Chapter 4 – No luck? Move on!

Some other tasks still must be covered but do not have high success rates or are specific to certain lost pet scenarios. There aren't any "magic bullets" to find a pet. However, there are effective techniques that get results. Don't give-up now! There is still hope. Keep up the momentum of your search, and move on!

1. **Additional Pet Detective services.** Consider hiring a Pet Detective to search in-person or provide help via phone. We offer one hour phone consultations for \$150 given by two highly renowned Pet Detectives. Call us at 800-925-2410 for more information. We can also provide other services, such as Fur and DNA Analysis, contacting the media, finding Pet Detectives near you, and more.
2. **Leave a way for your pet to come home safely.** If your pet attempts to return home it is important that there is a safe way for them to enter your property – especially at night, when you are away from home or not monitoring outdoor activity. Either leave a door cracked or propped open, or a garage or gate open. If that isn't an option for you, consider using baby monitors, leaving a window open or installing motion sensor lights so you are alerted to activity outside during the night. A study done by a veterinarian found that only 8% of lost pets return home on their own!
3. **Ask for more help.** If you asked for help during your initial search, you know that having people assist in the search is invaluable. At this point you need to ask AGAIN for help. You are not alone, and you do not have to search for your lost pet by yourself. Take a look at people who are willing to help. When asking for help, make sure to provide specific tasks so the person knows what they are getting into and tell them how long the tasks will take. For example, if you need a ride to the local shelter ask a friend to pick you up at home and drive you to the shelter on 1st Ave at 3pm on Monday and Friday. Tell them it will take one hour. Check craigslist, friends, family, rescue groups, co-workers and neighbors for people willing to help. 📌
4. **Pets & trash day.** Make sure you are out searching the night before and the morning of trash day. There is a noted correlation between trash day and pets scavenging during trash collection days. We have, so far, found two people who have confirmed studies that do support this. Alan Black did a study in Baltimore of stray dogs and their attraction to trash. He states that they are indeed attracted by these irresistible targets. He also noted that these attracted fox, cats, badgers etc. Roger Tabor (from England) equated trash day as the equivalent to an African water-hole for big game. He states that dogs and cats not only scavenge during the night they will also do so during the day. 📌
5. **Predators.** In most areas there are predators that will chase or attack cats. It is not a possibility we like to consider, but it is one thing that does happen. Some predators across the U.S. include: Great Horned Owls, Coyotes, Wolves, Bobcats, Mountain Lions, Foxes, Alligators and Crocodiles. Yes, Owls and Foxes can take cats. In addition, sometimes they do not leave any remains for a sad owner to find. If you consider this a possibility in your area, the only way to know is to do a COMPLETE Grid Search (looking on the ground – every square inch- for fur, remains, etc.) Sometimes people will be eyewitnesses to a predator scenario, and will come forward from the giant posters or the flyers. If you are not sure about

possible predators in your area, ask local Animal Control or Wildlife Management. They should be able to tell you about wildlife in your area. 🐾

4. **Walking and calling.** We have found that generally walking and calling is not as effective as the other techniques listed here. However, some pet owners do have success with this, especially when:
 - They walk around dusk, dawn or when it is very quiet at night.
 - They call for their cat in a calm voice.
 - They walk slowly, taking time to listen to any meow replies.
 - They pause, even sit down and just wait for movement or noise.
 - They walk slowly back home, allowing the pet to follow them, also creating a “scent trail.”
5. **Contact the microchip companies.** If your cat is microchipped, contact Avid at 800-336-2843, Home Again at 866-738-4324 or your microchip company. Be sure your cat is registered with them and that the contact number is current and the microchip number is correct. Online at www.AvidMicrochip.com or www.HomeAgainID.com There are other registration companies around, so if you have subscribed to their services, contact them too!
6. **Perform a thorough search of all hiding places – AGAIN.** This includes the high probability areas included in the list in Chapter 1. Even if you initially searched these locations outside, it must be done again, and again. Pay special attention to crawl spaces, sheds, and vacant properties.
7. **Witness development – AGAIN.** Continue placing GIANT NEON POSTERS in and out of your area. If you don’t have your cat back yet, expand your search area and put out more posters, further away. After two weeks, make new posters that say “STILL MISSING.” It is important to keep up the momentum. People forget or assume you have found your cat.
8. **Update flyers.** If your cat is missing for over two weeks it is definitely time to redo and change-up the small flyers. Change the background color, the font, picture and text. Add “STILL MISSING.” Most people forget or assume you found your cat. Distribute flyers door-to-door, and expand your search area. Go even further away.
9. **Consider using a "kitty buffet."** If you suspect your cat is near your area and you have a garage or shed, leave it open overnight. Inside, dust baby powder, flower or baking soda around a 5 ft. perimeter with a small amount of sardines & hot rice in the middle. If there are footprints in the morning, you will know that there is cat activity. The next night, place a humane trap in this same area, leave a door to the inside open or sit out and quietly wait. Optimal monitoring time is dusk and dawn.
10. **Use your house as a trap.** If you suspect your cat is nearby you can use your house as a trap to lure your cat back inside to safety. Leave hot rice & sardines inside the open door of your house, but only if it is safe. The smell will "waft" creating a "lure". This usually is for indoor only cats with a shy personality.
11. **Consider using a “Nanny Cam.”** Again, this method is best for indoor only cats, but works with others too, especially at sightings where there are other look-alike cats. Video cameras, motion sensor cameras and even night vision cameras can be purchased online at hunting

supply and private investigator supply stores, or even at mega-stores or electronics stores. Use to monitor the cat activity and to see if your cat is hiding nearby and coming out when you are not around. Place near your property, by food or by a trap. Test first! Basically, use the “kitty buffet” and position a motion sensor or night vision camera toward the food so that if your cat comes to eat you will get a video or picture of your cat. This is a long-term solution, and you should plan on using this technique with the “kitty buffet” for at least 7-14 days. The factors you should consider when purchasing one of these devices includes: Power/battery source, weather conditions (cold will sap the life out of the batteries quickly), time delay on photograph, video vs picture, and location of “kitty buffet.” You can also use this to exclude a sighting, proving that it isn’t your pet so you can focus on other leads. If you use a motion sensor camera you might get pictures of sunsets and sunrises because the light hits the sensor causing it to take a picture – your camera isn’t broken!

Some Cameras & Resources Recommended by Clients:

Wildview Digital Camera 800-304-6125, model# is STC TGL1. Serial number B 045018.

Seben Night Vision Goggles for \$735.00 <http://www.seben.com/>

Generic wireless, infrared, waterproof cameras on EBay for under \$50. Check the number of lights on the unit. Too few lights and you will not get a good image with infrared.

Wildlife Lukwerks outdoor camera for \$300. <http://www.spytecinc.com/>

Cabela's has many motion sensor and wildlife cameras, starting at \$59. www.cabelas.com

Generic wildlife cameras at Wal-mart or sporting goods stores.

Moultrie 4.0, Moultrie Game Spy 4.0, Moultrie D-40 and the Moultrie 5.0 digital cameras. Order on Amazon and LLBean for \$100. Spy 1-40 has good reports on battery life.

BirdCam camera with straps and remote for \$249. www.wingscapes.com

Loxex Indoor/Outdoor Color Security Camera with night vision and audio for \$40, model# is SG61825. Available at Radio Shack. Must have access to a power source. www.radioshack.com

Bushnell Trail Sentry 4.0 Digital Trail Camera, works without plug-in power for \$115. One bad report: Bushnell didn’t have long battery life and wasn’t reliable in cold temperatures.

www.bhphotovideo.com

You might also need an infrared illuminator to supplement the night vision cameras. It can increase the effective viewing range and clarity of the images on the night vision cameras.

Missing Pet Partnership (www.lostapet.org) suggests the Loxex VQ2121 100 foot Night Vision Illuminator available at www.amazon.com for about \$69.

12. **Consider using animals to lure your cat.** In cases where you are trying to trap an intact male cat, try using an intact female cat. Place the female inside a carrier or trap, and place at the rear of the humane trap, so they sit one after the other. The idea is that the male cat has to go inside the trap to visit with the female. If you are considering this option make sure you research it fully and NEVER leave a cat unattended outside as it could be stolen, let-out or hurt. You can also use this with pets from households with other pets as friends. Use the pet friend as the lure. Sometimes this is called “using a target pet.”
13. **If you find remains, consider DNA or Fur Analysis.** Most of the time if a pet is deceased, only a small amount of fur or remains are found. If fur is found that is a possible match, you can have DNA or Fur Analysis to see if it is a match to your lost pet. Please contact us for pricing and details. Remember: fur might not look like a visual match to your pet, but very well could be. Most pets have different colors and textures of fur covering their body. For

example, the fur on the belly is different from the fur on the face. In addition, weather and time can alter the visual appearance.

NEW TECHNIQUE: We have found many tufts of fur while searching for a lost pet. Sometimes we think it is a match, and after testing it turns out that it is not a match. The opposite also happens – that fur we think is not a match turns out to be a match. Most of the time you cannot visually match fur. Use gloves and collect all fur samples you find in your search. It could be a critical clue as to what happened to your pet. If you find unidentifiable remains in the street, we highly suggest collecting a fur sample for testing. A few of our clients have decided not to follow this route and have regretted not collecting a sample after-the-fact. Even if the remains are unidentifiable, often a tuft of fur is all that is needed to see if the remains are a match or not to the missing pet.

14. **Place “Lost” ads.** Make sure ads are placed in all local newspapers, especially free ones like the Pennysavor, Recycler, or similar.
15. **Check “Found” ads.** Check all of the ads in your local newspapers, including home delivery ones like Pennysavor, Recycler, etc. This is something that needs to be done for months if you don’t find your pet immediately.
16. **Check “For Sale” ads.** Especially if your cat is a kitten, purebred or exotic looking, make sure you check the for sale ads in all local newspapers.
17. **Perform “spotlighting.”** Shine a high-powered spotlight under cars, porches, crawl spaces, into canyons, etc. at night. Notify neighbors that you will be doing this so they do not become alarmed. The idea is that most animals will look at the light and their eyes will reflect. Try this technique walking but also driving in a car. The sound of your footsteps might scare some animals away, while sitting in a car usually doesn’t cause them alarm. Spotlights can be purchased online or at mega-stores. Optimal monitoring time is at night.
18. **Contact feral cat colony maintainers.** If there are any feral cat colonies in the area, their might be someone caring for the colony. Talk with them or leave them a note. Consider spotlighting this area at night.
19. **Contact the media.** Most lost cat cases aren’t of interest to the media. However, there are exceptions. If you know any media personnel, contact them. If there is something unique about your scenario, such as a cat that lives at a retirement community, or a cat with a medical condition, it is worth trying. Also use this if you are employing unique techniques to find your pet, offering a large reward or if the community is coming together to find your cat. All of these are great angles for the media. We offer media contact services, including writing press releases and contacting the media. \$240 for profile, press release and media contact. Please contact us if interested.



NEW TECHNIQUE: Try this unique idea to get media coverage. Organize all of your volunteers, or other pet owners searching for their lost pets. Schedule a vigil for lost pets or organize a special search party. Advertise the event to local media. Hopefully they will cover the event. Make sure you “stage” the event, complete with tons of giant posters for each of the missing pets. Remember, the media needs scenes that are visually interesting to tape for the news. People holding a banner, having a candle light vigil, hanging posters, etc are all interesting scenes.

NEW TECHNIQUE: It might be worth hiring Search Dogs to come out to search for your pet just for the benefit of getting media coverage. Just one short feature on the local evening news has the estimated value of over \$1200, depending on a variety of factors. This is particularly true for cases where a pet has been missing for over a few days.

20. **Deceased Animal Pick-up.** It isn't something that we want to think about, but it is necessary. You want to eliminate possibilities of what may have happened to your cat. Call Dead Animal Pick-up, otherwise you may never know. Research in your area to find out what services are used to pick-up deceased animals. Sometimes it is the Sanitation Department, and other times it is Animal Control. You may have to call multiple times to get an answer. Expect to repeat this task every few days. Even if your pet was wearing a collar or is microchipped, you need to contact them. Usually they will not call you.

NEW TECHNIQUE: When you do speak with someone, ask them when was the last time they picked-up a dead animal in your area. First, this forces them to go back through the files. Second, it will tell you how often they are called out to pick-up dead animals in your area, and how accurate their records are. If they haven't picked-up a deceased animal within the last week or two (depending on the population density) there is a good probability that they will not be accurate in their tracking of animals they pick-up.

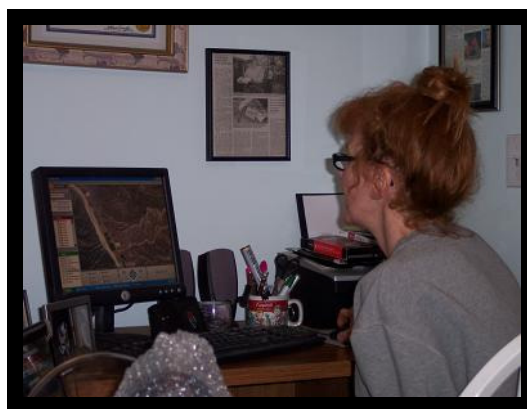
21. **Contact Veterinary Clinics, especially Emergency Clinics.** Start by contacting all Veterinarians in a 20 block radius and give them a flyer. Talk to the receptionists at the offices, they are great contacts. Go to: www.maps.google.com and type in the address from where your cat went missing, click “Search Maps” and then click “Search Businesses.” Fill in “Veterinarians” or “Emergency Veterinarians” and click “Search.” A list of clinics in your area will come up.

NEW TECHNIQUE: After you have contacted the first set of veterinary clinics, we suggest that you expand your search to include veterinary clinics within a mile radius. If you still do

not have luck, keep calling and keep expanding your search area. It is completely possible that you will need to contact 25 veterinary clinics in your search for your lost cat, or even more.

NEW TECHNIQUE: There are some businesses now offering to contact veterinary clinics for you via mail, email or fax. Search online or ask at your shelter for resources. However, be wary about just purchasing mailing lists as most are not really complete. Some microchip companies offer this service too.

22. **Continued physical check of local animal shelters.** Even if you initially checked in-person at the shelter, it is recommended to continue that practice. Find out what the policy is in the shelter. If they keep pets for 3 days before adopting them out, make sure you check in-person every 3 days. If they hold the animals longer, you can check less frequently.
23. **Check the “Found” pet book or bulletin board at the shelter.** Most shelters have a method for people to report when they found a pet. Ask them if they take “found” reports or if the let people leave “found” flyers. Check these regularly.
24. **Check shelter websites for “Found” pets.** Some shelters, especially ones in larger urban areas, offer online services. Take advantage of any email notification services too. Make sure you check all cats, in all shelters! Do not exclude animals because of age, location or sex. Do this every day!
25. **Post flyers at businesses.** Take flyers to grocery stores, shopping malls, fast food restaurants, pet stores, police stations, firehouses and schools. Ask them to post your flyer and keep an eye out for your cat. This is a must if you live within 500 – 1000 feet from any businesses.
26. **Post “Lost” ads online.** Make sure you post “lost” ads online at all popular lost pet sites, especially craigslist.



Ask volunteers to help with work online, even if they are out of the area and can't help in-person. They can post and check ads online.

27. **Check “Found” ads online.** Check craigslist and other lost pet sites for found cats that match your pet's description. Do not exclude cats because of the listed sex, age or area.

28. **Check “For Sale” ads online.** If your cat is a kitten, purebred or exotic looking make sure you check online ads selling pets. Make sure you check craigslist.
29. **Notify people working in the area.** Make sure you personally talk with letter carriers, cab drivers, package delivery service people, construction workers, gardeners, neighborhood children, homeless people, bus drivers, etc.
30. **Check nearby rural areas.** They can be used as a dumping ground for animals. If you suspect foul play, place a few GIANT NEON POSTERS in the rural area to cover this base. This is more successful with dogs than cats, but can be considered especially if you have a neighbor who complains about your cat.
31. **Don’t confine your search.** If your cat is alive and isn’t where they are supposed to be, then they must be where they are NOT supposed to be.
32. **Use email.** In some communities they have e-newsletters or group email lists. See if they can send out a special notice about your lost cat. Contact local real estate agents, who often have email lists for specific areas.

[NEW TECHNIQUE: Rescue groups, animal lovers, community activists and similar might have email lists too. Use the internet to spread the word about your missing pet and ask for volunteers and help.](#)

33. **Use online alerts to help in your search.** You can go to www.google.com (and possibly some other online resources) to set alerts. For example, if you have a lost Siamese you can put an alert for “Found Siamese.” The online tool then searches for any new online listings of “Found Siamese” and emails you the website. This is very helpful in stolen pet cases.
34. **Use your car for advertising.** Consider getting magnetic signs for your car to advertise your lost cat as you drive around town. You can buy these at sign shops or contact us. Use Prang Dry Erase Markers or window markers to write on your back car window to help get the word out! Simply write “LOST CAT”, a basic description (like “Black”), phone number, and date. If you live in a large city, also include general area cat went missing from. This technique is a requirement in areas where you have problems with hanging signs because of anti-graffiti rules or hyper-vigilant cleaning crews.



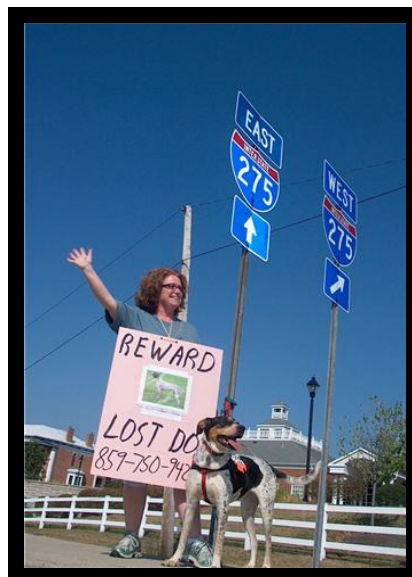
Samples of using Dry Erase Markers to get the word out about your missing dog.

35. NEW TECHNIQUE: Use Myspace and blogs. Some pet owners like to create websites or blogs especially for their pet during their lost pet search. It provides one central location for people to get updates and also gives people more details about your search. It might catch the eye of local media, volunteers or rescue groups.

Free Blog and Website Resources Recommended by Clients:

www.myspace.com / www.blog.com / www.worldpress.com
www.blogspot.com / www.blogger.com

36. **Sign twirlers.** They simply stand at street corners holding your signs. This is sometimes the only option in cities where hanging posters aren't allowed. Find sign twirlers online at craigslist or in the phone book, usually under "outdoor advertising."
37. NEW TECHNIQUE: Think positive! While this isn't a technique in the strict sense, having a positive focus can be important in your search. Many people who get their pets back credit being positive about finding their lost pet as contributing to the search effort. One of the primary reasons is that it can be frustrating searching for a lost pet, and easy to give-up. But keeping positive thoughts about your search can help you keep positive momentum to keep going that extra mile, which is what it can take to find a lost pet.
38. NEW TECHNIQUE: Pool resources. While out on your search for your missing pet, take down phone numbers of other pet owners searching for their lost pets. Consider contacting these people and asking them about pooling resources. Each pet owner could take one responsibility, like checking at a particular shelter or calling veterinarians for the group.
39. NEW TECHNIQUE: Dress up and wave at traffic. This is one of the extreme techniques that people hardly ever use, but gets results. Hire someone to dress up as your lost dog and stand at a busy intersection at rush hour, waiving at traffic. Be careful not to stop traffic as you can get a ticket. This technique was used by a cat owner in New Zealand. She rented a cat suit that looked like her cat and waved at traffic – and she got her cat back that had been missing SIX MONTHS. Local news media actually covered the event. Check out this link to see the media coverage. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jw7zLbqqA4>



This is a picture of a client waving at traffic. This helped get media coverage in the search.

40. NEW TECHNIQUE: Use a Sewer Camera to search hiding places. Lost cats are excellent at finding small hiding places! They can be hiding or stuck in spaces where you can't visually see the animal. One Pet Detective worked a case in Northern California and found a dog in a sewer, and could not visually see the dog. This high-tech device can be used in cases like that. You also might be able to find a local plumber with this device to come help check drainage ditches, pipes and other hard to reach hiding places.

Resources Recommended by Pet Detectives:

Real Color Sewer Camera Video Inspection System, wide range of prices, \$261 all the way up to \$1,000 at www.ebay.com (Use care when buying online.)

41. NEW TECHNIQUE: Mailing postcards. There are new businesses offering to mail out "Lost Cat" postcards to all of your neighbors. The benefit of this service is that it can save you time going door-to-door and is a great resource if your pet is lost away from home or if you are out of the area, such as on a vacation. It is a technique you can use without being onsite. However, there are some drawbacks to the service too. First of all, many people don't even look at junk mail. In addition, usually one person in a household is responsible for looking through the mail while other people have no idea about the content of the mailbox. For example, Mom or Dad might get the mail every day, while the nanny, son, daughter, Grandmother, etc might never look at the mail. Postage and printing costs can be expensive, especially if you live in a high population area. To find out more about this service in your area, look in the phone book or search online. Again, make sure that your postcards are bilingual, if appropriate for your area. You can also mail your own postcards, by printing them at home, with local printing companies (make sure you ask for a discount!) or online services like www.vistaprint.com or www.4over4.com (where you can get 250 postcards for \$39 plus fees.) You can get addresses from local real-estate agents or online at sites like www.melissadata.com (Use the free trial and go to Occupant list and select list by radius from where your cat went missing. You can only use the list for 30 days.) Also contact your local post office and ask about bulk mailing services they provide.



Sample of a postcard you can make at home. This postcard was made at www.vistaprint.com .



These postcards are from www.postcards4pets.com – a big picture of the pet is important along with contact information. We suggest including Spanish and a specific reward amount.

Resources Recommended by Pet Detectives:

Lost Pet Post Cards by Pet Detective with no minimum: www.postcards4pets.com

42. NEW TECHNIQUE: Novelty items to get the word out about your lost cat. You may decide that flyers and posters aren't enough, and that you need some unique "giveaway" items to make sure people don't just dispose of your fliers. Businesses use pens, t-shirts, hats, stickers, key chains, etc. to promote their business. Consider what items you can give out, especially at special events to get media attention. Some novelty items, like luggage tags, you could even make yourself. Refrigerator magnets or business card magnets are a great idea for your lost pet flyer.

Resources Recommended by Clients:

Promotional items, including key chains: www.promopeddler.com

Promotional items, including luggage tags: www.anypromo.com

Promotional items, including magnets, stickers, t-shirts and hats:

www.qualitylogoproducts.com 866-312-LOGO

Promotional items, including business card magnets and key tags for as low as .29 cents each: www.gopromos.com 800-523-9909

Luggage tags: www.tagmybags.com

Luggage tags, but pricey: www.crewtags.com

Promotional items, including business card magnets, buttons, dog tags PLUS a low price guarantee: www.promodirect.com

Promotional items, including business cards, magnets, t-shirts and more: www.vistaprint.com

Laminating supplies: www.laminator.com



Samples of luggage tags and how you can put a picture of your pet on one side and your message on the other. Clear tags are also available for you can make your own tags at home.



Some other examples of promotional items you can use to search for your lost cat include buttons, t-shirts and key chains.

43. **NEW TECHNIQUE: Phone calls to your neighbors.** An alternative to getting the word out to your neighbors about your lost pet. Basically how this works is you provide details about your lost pet and your contact information. A message is recorded about your missing pet. Then, an automated system calls your neighbors and replays the message. If an answering machine picks-up the call, then the message is replayed onto their answering machine. This technique does seem to generate some leads about lost pets, but in our experience they aren't always beneficial in the search for a missing pet. One drawback to this technique is that many people do not have landlines anymore, so those people would not receive your message about your lost pet. It also has the same issue as mailing postcards – only one person answers the phone at a time, so other members of the family may never know about the call. In addition, some are concerned about harassing their neighbors with phone calls. We have found that most neighbors don't mind the calls at all. Ask about bilingual services, as this might be important in your area. Try: www.findtoto.com or http://doggybegone.com/Home_Page.html Note: There has been a few reports of scams related to this service. One report was filed on a company called Petfinder's Alert, based in Nevada. So, it is important to do your research and select a service you are confident in. To see the report, go to: <http://www.ripoffreport.com/reports/0/369/RipOff0369685.htm>
44. **NEW TECHNIQUE: Church involvement.** If there is a church in your neighborhood or if you are active in a church, make sure you seek their support in your search. Often churches have newsletters, email lists and other resources. Possibly church members would be willing to put signs about your lost cat in their front yard.
45. **NEW TECHNIQUE: Special events.** Make sure you investigate about special events in your area, such as marathons, farmers markets, parades, etc. Use these major events to put flyers on car windows, hand out flyers and post signs about your lost cat.
46. **NEW TECHNIQUE: Night Vision Goggles, Binoculars or Monocular.** Some cats are so shy and skittish that they will not come out of hiding during the day. In addition, night vision goggles might be a good idea if you are getting sightings of your cat during night time. Attempting to capture a cat at night time is challenging and these can make it possible. The goggles allow for hands free movement (so you can carry equipment, use another pet to lure the cat, set traps, etc.) These can be expensive, but sometimes you can find them at hunting supply stores or even at pawn shops. If you know anyone who hunts see if they have a set

they will let you borrow. Make sure that you decide if goggles, binoculars or a monocular is best for your situation. Night vision binoculars and a monocular will let you see at night but is only helpful if the pet is at a distance. If possible, try them out first and do research online.

Resources Recommended by Pet Detectives:

Rigel 3200 Pro Night Vision Goggles for \$689. Order at www.nightvisionbinoculars.com

47. NEW TECHNIQUE: Research Poison Use, Poisonous Plants & Animals in Area. Poison is designed to kill animals. If an animal digests poison, or an animal that ate poison, they can get very sick and possibly die. People put poisoned bait out in residential areas to kill rats, and in farm areas to kill coyotes. There are even poisons used to kill and repel birds. Insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers are also deadly. So many potential poisons are available, quite frankly it is a miracle that more cats are not poisoned. If you are having a difficult time locating your pet, it might be a good idea to research poison use in your area.

You can simply walk your area and see if there are rat traps out, or ask neighbors. You can also contact your local wildlife management agency, such as the Division of Wildlife or Wildlife Services. While you are talking with them, also ask about poisonous animals, such as toads, salamanders and snakes. There are 16 species of toxic Bufo toads around the world. If a cat simply mouths the toad they can get a giant dose of the toad's poison, and the death rate without treatment of some species is almost 100% There is one poisonous salamander in the United States, and it is found in California. It can cause paralysis. Snakes are a major issue in some parts of the United States.

In addition to poisonous animals, there are also poisonous plants. Plus, animals can get into chemicals and medicines in the home. As if that wasn't enough, some animals are carriers of diseases that can be deadly to our pets. Rats are carriers of leptospitosis, a potentially fatal disease for both humans and pets. Pets become infected when they come into contact with bodily tissues or fluids from a diseased rat, such as swimming where a rat died or urinated.

One side note about rat poison: Often it includes warfarin, which cases symptoms like hemorrhaging and internal bleeding. Many people mistakenly think that vomiting would be a symptom, when in fact it is not. Many pets who ingest poisons do not vomit. It does disrupt the blood's ability to clot. The poisoning of a cat might not become evident until 36 – 48 hours after the cat ingested the toxin. If a pet got into the poison, then wandered off when ill, it might not be a clear case of why a pet went missing.

Resources Recommended by Pet Detectives:

List of State and Federal Wildlife Damage Management: <http://icwdm.org/>
List of Wildlife Services from the USDA: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/
ASPCA Poison Control: <http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/poison-control/>

Chapter 5 – Hiring a Pet Detective & Search Dogs

This chapter is about utilizing Pet Detectives and Search Dogs in the search for your lost pet. All of the different terms and options can be confusing. Here are some insights and information about Pet Detectives and Search Dogs. Definitions related to Pet Detectives and their work follows.

Just like you turn to an expert with any serious problem, consider working with a professional to find your missing pet. Consider all options when you are searching for a lost pet, and use all resources possible. One resource that might be available to you is a Pet Detective to search in-person or provide help via phone. Pet Search and Rescue offers one hour phone consultations given by two highly renowned Pet Detectives. Call us at 800-925-2410 for more information. We can also provide other services, such as Fur and DNA Analysis, contacting the media, finding Pet Detectives near you, and more.

Most Pet Detectives offer specialized services, including trained Search Dogs. Others offer support, consultations and help “pounding the pavement.” No matter if the Pet Detective offers Search Dogs or not, the end goal is the same – finding your lost pet.

Search Dogs do what dogs do naturally – they use their nose to find their quarry. People try to categorize and label what the Search Dogs do. But, in reality, we don’t even know what they smell! But, training Search Dogs to find a specific target (pet or people!) is a life-long commitment requiring hours of devotion and patience working with the dogs. It also involves many challenges that present catastrophic problems. Overcoming these challenges require commitment, proficiency and support of expert Search Dog trainers.

However, searching for a pet is a team effort. Search Dogs are not a magic wand. Don’t hire a Pet Detective if the only outcome you would be happy with is the Pet Detective bringing your missing dog back in their arms. That rarely happens. Search Dogs are one tool in an effective search for a lost pet. Most pets are found with a combination of techniques, such as the methods listed in this guide. That being said, some pets are found with the Search Dogs that would never be located with other methods. When looking for a Pet Detective also consider if you want a professional with trained or certified dogs, or if you are okay working with someone in-training or even a hobbyist. All options have benefits and drawbacks, but availability might be the major factor when selecting services to help search for your lost pet.

There is a growing movement to offer Pet Detective services for free or a donation in conjunction with rescue groups or shelters. However, that is a distant dream at this time and will take support from communities and passionate people who understand the importance of recovering lost pets and returning them to their loving owners. Search online and ask at the local shelter if there are any such resources in your area; however chances are that you will have to hire a Pet Detective for the special services. After you find your pet, consider volunteering with Missing Pet Partnership at www.lostapet.org.

Price is a major factor to consider when looking at hiring a Pet Detective. Pet Detective services are not for everyone, and it can be cost-prohibitive. For lost pet cases many times a Pet Detective will have to travel to your area. Prices range from an hourly rate of around

\$100, all the way up to thousands of dollars. Price usually depends on the following factors: location of the lost pet case, travel distance, terrain, the time a Pet Detective works on your case, case details, and level of service. The primary factor typically is travel time or distance. However, each Pet Detective sets their fees, so you will need to obtain a specific quote for your case.

Some people are surprised to find out that Pet Detectives charge for their services and are not volunteer-based like traditional Search and Rescue for missing people. In addition, some are shocked at the prices and think they can buy a Bloodhound for the rates that some Pet Detectives charge. One person commented, “My husband believes that if a service costs more to do than the animal costs to buy, then it isn’t worth it. In my position I can only spend \$25 to \$50. I think that all pet owners (not just the wealthy ones) should be able to afford any pet service.”

There are a few reasons why Pet Detectives charge for their services. First, the training required to really offer professional services like this is extensive. It can take 6 months to 2 years to train a Search Dog to find missing pets. It isn’t as simple as buying a certain breed of dog and going to work. Even Bloodhounds require training to know what they are supposed to look for. Plus additional training for the Pet Detective is the respected standard. Travel costs to attend training also contribute to expenses as most people have to travel long distances to get to training locations. Second, Pet Detectives and Search Dogs cannot work every single day. It is often strenuous work and the Search Dogs have to take days off and fit in more training. Third, in today’s business world the cost of overhead is astronomical. Even phone and internet bills are expensive. Add onto that the cost of maintaining healthy dogs (some Pet Detectives have multiple dogs in various levels of training) and the high cost of living quickly makes it necessary to charge high prices to be able to offer the services.

In addition, not all pet services are for everyone. We sincerely wish that veterinarians and other pet services did not have to charge for their services. However, that isn’t a reality. And, Pet Detectives generally have to charge for their services too. Most Pet Detectives do offer free information and donate search times for some cases, such as searches for military veterans.

Another client incorrectly thought that Pet Detectives with Search Dogs are a simple service. “All I was thinking was that someone would come by, ask me some questions, get a scent from the floor somehow, and that’d be it. I had no idea how challenging and involved it is.”

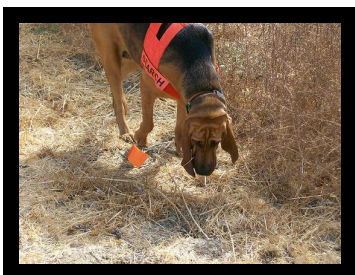
Compare this to when the police, FBI and Search and Rescue are called out on a missing person case. The Search Dogs have to train for months, if not years, to be “mission ready.” It costs tens of thousands of dollars to search for a missing person and the search can go on for years. They have specialists who deal with profiles, Search Dogs, crime scene analysis, investigating, etc. Pet Detectives have to attend and pay for training and provide all of these services themselves. Of course, the family of a missing person never has to deal with the cost of the search for their loved one. Tax-payers generally cover the search cost. How many people would not hire the police if they had to pay a \$100,000 + bill to search for a relative?

And, just like a missing person case, Pet Detectives do not find every missing pet. If it was easy to train the dogs and search for missing people, then traditional Search and Rescue

would find all of the people they went looking for. It really is like looking for a needle in a million haystacks, where the needle could be moving all of the time. The vast majority of lost cats are not just sitting under a bush for us to find. Both searching for people and pets is difficult and dangerous. Searches can be in a wide range of locations, including swamps, dangerous intersections, and hillsides and have poison ivy, cactus plants, aggressive dogs, angry neighbors and other challenges.

However, despite all of these points, many times the lost pets are located by the Search Dogs. And, even if the pet is not located with the dogs immediately, the information the Search Dogs find can be critical. For example, if a pet is picked-up and put into a car immediately versus if a dog is hiding in a canyon can be important in helping determine what to do next in your search and what area to focus on.

Personally, I would hire a Pet Detective with Search Dogs if one of my pets went missing, but I would also be prepared for any outcome including not finding my pet.





Pictures of trained Search Dogs working lost pet cases. www.PetSearchAndRescue.com
One common mistake pet owners make is following cookie-cutter instructions for finding missing pets- even using this guide! The internet, well-meaning friends and shelter workers want to help and do provide some excellent suggestions. However, using a professional Pet Detective is a helpful method in making sure that you are conducting the right search for your pet – based on your location, your pet’s personality, how your pet escaped, your pet’s health, breed, size and past history.

Finding a Pet Detective can be challenging because of a few reasons. First of all, there are only a few people in the entire U.S. offering Lost Pet Services. Second, many Pet Detectives don’t advertise, or at least don’t advertise in common locations such as the telephone book. Finally, some Pet Detectives may be in training or have dogs that are not ready for certification. They may not be promoting their services until they have completed their training. But, they are excellent resources and options as they can still try to find your lost pet. So, tracking down a Pet Detective can be hard. To find a Pet Detective most people simply search online. However, your local animal shelter or veterinary clinic might know of someone offering these services. Pet Search and Rescue can help you find a Pet Detective, and offer consultation services to any location with telephone access.

If you are considering hiring a Pet Detective, it is a good idea to ask some questions about their training and experience. Many people want to know about a success rate and how many pets we have found. However, there are so many things that happen to lost pets that are out of anyone’s control that any sort of statistic can be misleading.

Ask for some information before hiring a Pet Detective, such as:

- Training References. Ask for names and contact information for at least one or two people that the Pet Detective has trained with. It is impossible to train a Search K9 alone. Contact the reference and ask questions about their training.
- Client Reference. Any Pet Detective should be able to provide you with at least a few names with email or phone numbers of past clients. Every single case is different, so don’t

expect that your case will be identical to the other client's. But, it will help you see how the Pet Detective operates.

- If they have Search Dogs, ask if they are trained to find remains.
- If the Pet Detective offers you a guarantee that they will find your pet, that is a red flag. It is impossible to find every single pet.
- Most Pet Detectives are not licensed Private Investigators. If you have a stolen pet, ask the Pet Detective for a referral.
- Ask how long the Pet Detective will search. Most services are for a specific amount of time, not unlimited.

Definitions:

Area Search Dog	A dog trained to locate any fresh pet scent in the directed search area. Usually, no scent article is provided to the dog at the start of the search session.
Bastard Search	A comprehensive and detailed search of the office and the surrounding property to make sure the pet is not stuck or hiding. This term is from Search and Rescue, because small children are found hiding or sleeping in small spaces at home, such as under beds.
Cat Detection Dog	This type of Search Dog is trained to search for any cat that is in the search area. Just like Drug Detection dogs alert on all drugs, or Bomb Detection dogs will alert on any bomb, Cat Detection dogs will alert on any cat. Using a Search Dog trained in Cat Detection can be challenging in areas with high cat activity, because the dog will try to find any and all cats in the vicinity. This category of Search Dog was introduced by Kat Albrecht of Missing Pet Partnership and Pet Hunters International.
Certification	A test to determine the dog team's ability. Both the handler and dog must work together as a team to determine proficiency.
Direction of Travel	The general route that the lost pet took. This term is used in Search and Rescue when working Search Dogs to find a missing person.
Find / Walk-up Find	When a dog locates the quarry it has been searching for.
Ghost Trail	When a dog follows a non-existent trail.
Handler	The person handling or training the dog.
Hot Track	A term used when the trail is fresh and the dog is trailing well.
Human Animal Bond (HAB)	The bond or connection a pet owner has with their pet.
Missing Animal Response K9	A Search Dog trained under the guidance of Kat Albrecht and Missing Pet Partnership or Pet Hunters International.
Missing Animal Response Technician	A Pet Detective trained by Pet Hunters International.
Negative Indication	Body language the dog displays when the scent weakens or ends.
Pet Detective	A person who looks for lost pets using a variety of techniques. Common techniques include: Search Dogs, surveillance, witness development, checking shelters, phone consultations, humane trapping, etc.
Pet Theft Myth	There are limited statistics on how many pets really are stolen or taken for use in research. Animal activists claim an extreme number of animals are stolen, while businesses in animal research claim no pets are stolen. The reality is probably somewhere in between. But, the myth is perpetuated and causes pet owners undue concern.
Probability of Detection	The chance that the missing animal could be detected by searchers if it is, in fact, within the search area.
Reading Your Dog	Ability to recognize signs given by the dog indicating relative information.
Runaway	The foundation of training a Trailing Search Dog used for motivation. It is also the primary method for teaching the Search Dog to use their keen sense of smell to locate their quarry.
Scent	The smell of the quarry the dog is trailing.
Scent Article /	Any item that has been worn, handled or come into contact with a subject used to give

Scent Item	the dog the scent of the pet and started on the search.
Scent Cone	A pattern created by scent emanating from a pet which will spread over a larger area as air currents carry the scent, creating a cone-shaped pattern.
Scent Dog	This term frequently is used interchangeably with the term Search Dog. It means that the dog is trained to work with scent to locate its quarry.
Scent Pool	Areas where the scent has concentrated in large amounts due to a target spending time in an area.
Scent Specific Search Dog / Specific Scent Search Dog	A versatile type of Search Dog, used to search for all types of lost pets. They can both search an area for a pet such as a hamster, or they can be used to follow the scent trail of a mobile animal, such as a horse. In either scenario, the Search Dog is presented with the specific scent of the lost pet they are locating.
Search Area / Target Area	The identified areas to focus search efforts and resources after Search Dogs have determined a Direction of Travel.
Search Dog	The general category of dogs trained specifically to locate quarry. They can be trained in a variety of ways, depending on the focus of their work. Examples of Search Dogs include: Trailing, Tracking, Area Search, Bomb Detection, Drug Detection, etc.
Target Animal / Target Pet / Subject	Pet the dog is search for.
Tracking Dog	The dog follows the scent trail footstep to footstep, primarily on crushed vegetation. The methods used to train a Tracking Dog are very different than the techniques used to train a Trailing Dog.
Trailing Dog	A Trailing Dog is a dog trained to follow the scent trail of a lost pet from one location (where the pet was lost from) along where the pet traveled to where the pet currently is to be found. The Trailing Dog uses a combination of scent as well as crushed vegetation odor left by its quarry. This type of dog is used frequently by Search and Rescue to locate missing people. It is proven that dogs are very capable of trailing over hard surface areas, such as cement, and discriminating between different scents.

In the end, no matter if you have someone help you search for your pet or not, no one will take the place of a loving owner in a search. It takes hard work to get a pet back, time and money. If there is one thing you should remember in your search: Don't give up!

Chapter 6 – Dealing with Sightings & Calls

There are basically seven different kinds of calls. Here is a list of those calls and how to deal with them. Make yourself aware of the procedures to deal with each one of these – it will save you time and heartache! Categorizing calls was originally done by Private Investigator and Pet Detective Karin TarQwyn. However, here we have made some changes based on our experiences of calls that pet owners receive.

1. **Well-wishers.** These are the most common types of calls people receive. They are from friendly neighbors and animal lovers in the area wanting you to know they are looking or that they hope you find your pet. Usually they don't have anything specific to contribute to the case, but take their name in number in case you contact the media and you want to organize a "search party" or similar. Sometimes people will call to offer a replacement cat or kitten. They might have kittens they are looking to find a home for, or an adult cat they can no longer care for. Be prepared for these calls as it takes time to talk to everyone, and also can pull at your heart strings when you are in an emotionally vulnerable time.
2. **Complaints.** After "Well-wishers," people calling with complaints are usually the next most common types of calls! These are people who complain about your flyers or posters. Occasionally it will be from the city or the police informing you of a local ordinance about graffiti or posting signs. If it is a citizen, apologize and ask for the location of the sign or flyer – or just ask them to remove it themselves! To a citizen or a city worker explain that you are desperate to get your pet back and you are doing the best search you can. Ask the city employee about the laws, where you can get a permit or how long you can leave the signs up. Very recently the number of complaint calls have increased – do be prepared!
3. **Prank calls.** These are kids or people who think it is funny to say mean things to strangers on the phone. Be wary of every call. Remain calm and ask them for their name and phone number. If they hang-up or refuse, it is probably a prank. Try the techniques listed under "Scam calls" to be sure.
4. **Scam calls.** These are calls from people who do not actually have your cat, but want to try to get money from you anyway. Remain calm and ask them for their name and phone number. If they hang-up or refuse, it is probably a scam. If they stay on the phone it is critical to ask them a trick question. This is a question you know is FALSE about the pet. For example, ask if the cat has a white tail when you know your cat's tail is solid black. You can use a few trick questions! If they claim to have your pet ask them something only a person actually with your pet would know, such as the condition of their teeth, a scar, the color of their nails or whiskers. If they are unable to answer the questions, it is a scam.
5. **Ransom demands.** These calls could be "Scam calls," meaning they do not actually have your pet. Or, they could be the real deal. Yes, some people take pets only to return them for the reward. However, this is much more likely in a stolen purebred dog case. Remember; get your pet back FIRST then deal with the crime. ALWAYS pretend that the person calling is your hero – you just want your pet back. In a ransom call they will either

demand more money as a “reward” than what you have posted, or be overly concerned that you bring the cash with you to the exchange. We HIGHLY suggest hiring a Private Investigator to be undercover for any exchanges to make sure they go smoothly, take down the person’s license plate information, and even take video or pictures for criminal charges. As with “Scam calls” you need to remain calm and ask them for their name and phone number. Ask them the trick question, something that is false about your pet. Ask them something that only a person with your pet would know, such as the condition of their teeth, a scar, the color of their nails or whiskers, etc. If they are unable to answer the questions, it is unlikely that they actually have your pet in their possession.

NEW TECHNIQUE: If you really can’t tell if they have your cat, ask them to take a picture with their camera phone and email it to you. Almost everyone has a camera phone these days. It can provide proof that they have your cat or not.

- 6. Sightings.** You must check each possible sighting. Often in a lost cat case there are multiple sightings. Especially, if the cat has common coloring, such as being all black or if your cat went missing in an area of high cat activity. False sightings are common too. This is when a person sees another animal and thinks it is yours. First, ask them for their name and number. Second, ask them for as many details of the sighting, including the specific time and location they saw the animal. Third, ask them a trick question – something that is FALSE about the pet. If they say, “Why no, the pet had a black tail,” when you suggested the tail was white that is a good lead! Finally, ask them if you can meet them (in a safe location with a friend, of course) with some pictures OR if you can email them some pictures of your cat. When you meet them or email them, provide them with multiple pictures of multiple pets. Ask them to identify which pet they saw. See if they pick-out your pet or another one. This is a technique from the police and FBI, called a Line-Up. Karin Goin was the first to use this technique in lost pet cases. If possible make sure you use a picture of your pet that is NOT used on your flyers or posters because it would be easier for the person just to pick that picture out. This is CRITICAL with sightings and will save you countless hours. To create a line-up of pictures of pets that looks similar to your pet. Copy and paste 6 to 8 pictures of cats that look similar to your cat from Google Images. Place these pictures, along with your cat’s picture on an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper and print out. This is highly effective.

If they answered the trick questions correctly and picked-out the correct pet from the line-up that is considered a confirmed sighting. In the sighting area follow the directions in this guide, starting at the beginning. It is critical to talk to neighbors door-to-door, hand-out flyers, post GIANT NEON POSTERS, and possibly consider humane trapping.

NEW TECHNIQUE: Even if the person with a sighting doesn’t immediately select your pet’s picture from the line-up, it still could have been your pet that they saw. Use the line-up to help identify other specifics about the cat they saw, such as if the cat’s ears or coloring, if the cat had a long tail fluffy tail or short, etc. In other words, use it to help draw additional details from the person with the sighting so you can judge if it could be your missing cat.

NEW TECHNIQUE: If you are unable to meet with a person to show them the line-up you can simply email them the document with photographs and see if they can pick out what cat they saw online. This is not the preferred method, as they could possibly

compare pictures of your pet from online, posters or flyers to the pictures on the line-up. It is best if they are caught off guard and have to make a quick decision.

Sample Line-up:



Again, if they answered the trick questions correctly and picked-out the correct pet from the line-up that is considered a confirmed sighting. In the sighting area follow the directions in this guide, starting at the beginning. It is critical to talk to neighbors door-to-door, hand-out flyers, post GIANT NEON POSTERS, billboards, banners and possibly consider humane trapping.

If you are getting sightings in an area and can not get there in time to see the cat they are seeing or if the person is unable to confirm that it is your cat, buy disposable cameras and give them to people. Ask them to take a picture of the cat and call you. You can develop the pictures to see if it is your cat!

7. **“I have your pet.”** These are usually the easiest types of calls – the one from a person who has your pet, wants the reward (or doesn’t even know about it) but wants to return your pet.

Still, you want to ask for their name and number, ask a few trick questions along with a detail or two and then arrange a meeting place. Make sure you take someone with you and meet at a safe location. If you promised a reward, be prepared to give it!

NOTE: If someone calls and states they want to keep your cat or are hesitant to return the animal it might be a good idea to point out an **OBVIOUS** problem with the pet. We do **NOT** recommend making things up, like “cat has heart problem,” because most people would suspect that it was a lie. Rather, we suggest informing the person of clear problems. For example, some cats have runny eyes or eye problems. This is the time to point it out to them and tell them it is a problem that needs attention or could get worse. Make sure you don’t just tell them what is wrong, but rather tell them how to see for themselves. For example, “if you notice she limps on the right foot because she has a broken hip.” Or, point out a bad behavior, such as not being potty trained, marking, etc. Anything that encourages the person to return the pet to you!

NOTE: There are a few other things we suggest mentioning if you need to convince someone to return your pet. If they are attached, tell them you will get them a cat of their own. (There are so many rescues and shelters looking for homes for kittens of all breeds.) Also, you could mention how your children are devastated, about how you were depressed and your cat was your only friend, or even how the pet belonged to your parent who passed away. We encourage telling the truth, but emphasize anything that is emotional and might convince the person to return your pet or to help you.

NOTE: This is **NOT** the time to mention your connections or try to intimidate the person. Remember, act as if the person calling is your hero and make it as easy as possible for them to safely return the pet to you. If after you have tried this you might consider getting a little bit more assertive with the person, but use care. Try to get as much information, including their name and phone number, before changing tactics.

NEW TECHNIQUE: **NOTE:** Consider involving the police or a private investigator if needed.

Case Example: One Pet Detective reported on a lost Boston Terrier case that outlines how important it can be to have a system for dealing with lots of calls. A huge mistake that most pet owners make is running around after every single sighting. Statistically there is probably a cat in your area that has similar characteristics as the missing pet, such as similar color, size or breed. The missing Boston Terrier was found after 3.5 weeks. The small dog ended up in a different town, almost 10 miles away. The owner had over 1,000 calls from people wanting to help, including many calls from people sighting Boston Terriers running loose. When the owner followed-up on these sightings (Boston Terriers are a unique breed, and it would be very strange for there to be that many Boston Terriers running around town) they found out that there were indeed loose Boston Terriers. There were escapees from 3 puppy mills in the area that breed the dogs irresponsibly. The two local SPCA's were well aware of the "feral" Boston Terriers. This unfortunate coincidence made it difficult to find the missing dog, but illustrates how important it is to be organized and follow a system when calls start coming in about your lost cat.

Summary: How to deal with calls:

1. **Phone Number and Name:** Be sure to ask for and write down the caller's phone number and name. Use an excuse if necessary, "My cell has really bad reception." This is CRITICAL! Most people forget to get the person's phone number. Many times it is necessary to call back and ask for more details. Remind the person that there is a reward. IF they do not want to provide this basic information it might be a prank call.
2. **Details:** Obtain as many details as possible, including a specific time and location.
3. **Trick Question:** Ask the person something that is FALSE about your cat. For example, ask if the cat has a white tail when you know your cat's tail is solid black. You can use a few trick questions!
4. **Line-up:** This is the most difficult part of dealing with leads because it can be awkward. But, it is very important to determine if the person actually saw your pet. See if they will meet you, but never go alone. If they don't want to meet you in person ask for their email address or if you can put it in their mailbox at home.

Dealing with sightings can make or break your search. It can be exhausting to deal with calls and wonder if the caller actually saw your pet. Use these techniques and write all information down. You never know when that important call may come and you will always need to take notes!

Chapter 7 – Studies of Lost Pet Behavior & Missing Pet Recovery

This is the shortest chapter in this guide. The reason is that there has never been any large scale research into lost pet behavior.

One of the small studies performed more recently was conducted in Montgomery County, Ohio on 138 cats and 187 dogs. The results appear in the January 15, 2007 issue of the [*Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*](#).

The study, conducted by Linda Lord, a professor of veterinary preventative medicine, covered a 4 month time span (between June 1 and September 30, 2005.) For the study they called classified ads to get cases, along with contacting area shelters.

They found that 73 of the 138 cats were recovered, which is 53%. The median time for the cats to be recovered was 5 days, with the longest being recovered at 81 days. The majority of cats, 48 cats at 66%, actually returned home on their own. Five cats, or 7%, were found in the neighborhood. Most of the other cats were found through posting flyers in the neighborhood. Eight cats, or 11%, were found with this technique. Five cats were found by contacting or visiting an animal agency.

The highest success rate for any of the methods was posting neighborhood signs, but was only used 12%. Only 26 of the 138 cats had any identification at the time they were lost such as identification tag, rabies tag or microchip. That translates into only 19% of the cats were wearing some form of identification.

Most of the cats in the survey permitted their cats outdoors. 59% of the cats were allowed to spend time outside. One critical fact to note: Only 25% of sexually intact cats were recovered by their owners compared to 57% of neutered cats that were recovered.

The conclusion of the survey is as follows: “Results suggest that the percentage of lost cats recovered by their owners is low, possibly in part because of the lack of use of traditional identification methods and the general acceptance that cats may roam. Veterinarians can help educate owners about the importance of identification and the need to keep cats indoors.”

The population of the area covered in the study was around 550,000 with the population density of 1,211 people per square mile. Keep in mind that Los Angeles County has a population over 10,000,000 with a population density of 7,876 people per square mile. So, despite the fact that the findings are interesting and can provide clues, it isn't completely applicable to different locations.

Lord commented on people and their missing pets, “For many of the owners in this study, it was the first time their pet had disappeared. Pet owners should think about having a plan in place in case their pet is lost. Both animal shelters and veterinarians can educate their clients and the public about the best course of action to take when a pet is missing.”

In Los Angeles at one of the shelters, they reported during one month of 2008 that out of 653 cats, only 4 were reunited with their owners. Out of 556 dogs, 86 were returned to their owners. (Note: These intake numbers also include pets turned in by their owners.) These are shockingly low numbers. Shelters generally focus on intake and adoption, and returning lost pets to their owners takes a back seat. Some of the time it is because of necessity, but most of the time it is because of a lack of knowledge of lost pet behavior and the factors that impact an owner finding their lost pet – and how shelters can help.

One animal welfare group reports that a shocking 64% of animals at shelters in the U.S. are euthanized. We don't want to mention this to upset you, but so you have the facts and can act accordingly. More cats than dogs are euthanized, and cats are more likely to enter a shelter without identification. They estimate that only 15% of dogs are reunited with their owners, and 25% of dogs are adopted.

Missing Pet Partnership hopes to be able to do more studies in the future. www.lostapet.org

Chapter 8 - Facts & Frequently Asked Questions

It is cold, there are coyotes and my cat has no food. How long can my cat survive? Cats are incredibly sturdy, and they are great at hiding. They are survivors, and have strong instincts – even “couch potato” cats! We know of cats that have survived in heavy traffic areas and scavenged for food for years without major injury. It is pretty common for cats to survive for weeks, if not months. Water is the most important factor, and once they find a water source (which is pretty easy in most areas with water sprinklers, creeks, etc.) they can usually find food and safe hiding places. Many lost cats are absorbed into feral cat colonies.



This picture was taken by a Pet Detective of a coyote approaching her two pet dogs during the middle of the day. Coyotes are present in almost every state, and are aggressive with household pets in many areas. However, just because there are coyotes it doesn't mean that they attacked your pet.

What do you think about pet psychics? We have worked cases where psychics have been correct about a missing pet, and also cases where they have been wrong. If you decide to use an animal psychic we suggest that you decide on a budget for this service and stick to it (possibly even telling the psychic of your budget) as some people have had these services promise help, but only if they get more money. In addition, do not base your search on these services, but conduct a complete search as advised in this guide. We have worked cases where psychics were correct about what happened to the pet, and some police forces do use psychics. However, we have also worked many cases where they were factually wrong, stating that the pet was deceased when it was alive and vice-versa.

Are pets really stolen? Yes, pet theft does happen. In the past it was not as common, and it is not common with cats. But as small breed dogs become more popular it is happening more often. If you suspect that your pet was stolen, please contact us for a Stolen Pet Guide and consider hiring a Private Investigator.

Case Example: A dog was stolen from a hospice center in Santa Barbara! Sarah, the house dog, was stolen from the property. Several house residents witnessed the abduction. After getting media attention, the dog was recovered.

Case Example: One pet owner left her dog in her car when she ran an errand. Someone came by and smashed the window in to swipe the dog. She never recovered her dog.

Case Example: One pet owner's house was broken into. They took only a few items, but did take her beloved pet.

Does my cat remember his name? Will my pet come when I call? A pet will revert back to being more feral in order to survive. Do not count on your pet coming when called. Even the best trained pet will not always come when called. The interesting thing is that once they are back home they often act as if nothing ever happened!

Case Example: One pet owner reported online, "George remembered his name, without a doubt. But, the morning I had my first sighting of him I do believe that hearing his name (and the panic in my voice) scared him away. My advice is to call calmly, especially if your pet is sighted close to home. However, it's likely that your pet will not answer or come to you, but it might be good for them to hear your voice."

Case Example: Another pet owner reported, "The first night he ran away from me and it broke my heart. But, trust me, it's an instinct and it's why they survive. So, don't think that he doesn't love you or want to come home because he didn't answer. I know it is hard, I always thought that MY pet was different, that they would surely come if they heard me. And never in a million years would I have thought I'd need a trap. But I did. So don't despair... your pet loves you. But you might have to MAKE him come home."

My pet has a microchip. How come my pet has not been found? Isn't the microchip like GPS? A microchip is not GPS. In other words, just because your pet has a microchip it does not mean that your pet can be located with satellites. A microchip is for identification purposes, but someone must use a compatible "wand" (usually available at veterinary clinics and shelters) to scan the pet and read the chip information. Then, they have to take that information and contact the microchip company and get your information. That is why it is so important to update your information with the microchip company!

Search Dogs came out to look for my pet and the scent trail ended. What does this mean? What happens when the Search Dog tracks to a specific location and we can't find our pet? This is a common outcome when using Search Dogs to look for a missing pet. This happens on many of the tracks the Search Dogs work. Very rarely do the Search Dogs walk-up to the roaming pet. Cats are rarely waiting for us to find them in a bush! The lost pet will walk to a specific location and by the time we get called, respond and perform our search for the missing pet, the pet has already been picked up by a well meaning person to be cared for. This happens to many of the pets we search for, especially small breed animals. Perhaps if the pet was hurt or injured it was taken to a pet hospital. That is why we urge you to contact veterinary hospitals. Another possibility is that the pet was attacked. It is a sad reality that sometimes there is nothing left for the Search Dogs to find. The Search Dogs give you a Direction of Travel (DOT). Your pet could also still be roaming (this happens with large breed skittish type dogs sometimes) or

hiding nearby (this happens more with lost cats.) You can then post your Lost Pet Neon Posters or Banners near the area the Search Dogs indicate your lost pet's trail. About 60% of our clients find their pets this way. This saves you time and money and is very effective!

My pet has ID tags on – why am I not receiving a call that someone found my pet? The sad truth is that a person may want to keep your cat for themselves or possibly they are waiting for a reward to be posted. This is particularly true for cute small breed dogs. Some cats are hard to catch. I know from personal experience, after trying to catch a roaming Chihuahua for 2 hours! Don't count on a cat that is usually friendly coming up to people – they can act very differently away from home. This is where witness development can play a critical role in finding your pet. A collar can be removed or pulled off. Sometimes the pet will lose weight and a collar could come off this way. Another possibility is that the phone number or information on the tag was not legible. This happens many times. Even if only one or two numbers are hard to read, it could be impossible to contact you. With witness development you are trying to reach people who saw the cat or know something about your cat, not just the person who actually has your cat currently. Most often when a person sees a lost cat, even if it has identification, they assume that it is just an outside cat that is new to the area. So, they don't even attempt to catch the cat or call the number on the tags!

How do we know the Search Dog's track was accurate? There is never a 100% guarantee that the Search Dogs will find a lost pet. Pet Detectives try to give it their best effort. It is often said that Search Dogs don't know how to lie, which is one reason why their testimony is permitted in a court of law, with training, testing and documentation. A Search Dog is trained to follow the trail of the scent given to them by their handler (or Pet Detective.) A strong level of trust and respect between the Pet Detective and Search Dog is critical. Even the best trained Search Dogs with the FBI are not 100% accurate. There are rare times where the Search Dogs end up following a false track. The estimate found in limited research is that this happens approximately one in every few hundred searches and can be caused by many reasons. Search Dogs pick-up the freshest scent of the lost pet and track it. (The scent of the pet is left when it walks a certain way. The scent falls to the ground and stays there until the wind and air currents move the scent to nearby dirt or vegetation where it is held until it dissipates.)

What hurts scent? Can you guarantee that the Search Dogs will pick-up scent? There are a few things that hurt scent. Heavy vehicle traffic can contaminate scent. Heavy rains of over 2 inches per day may wash scent down to different areas. Heat can dry out scent and make it strenuous to work in the heat. Cigarette smoke is awful for scent and for the Search Dog's sense of smell. Most Pet Detectives will not guarantee that their Search Dogs will pick-up the scent of the missing cat. Scent conditions are out of our control and we cannot guarantee that the Search Dogs will pick-up scent. However, it is very rare that they would not find scent.

Will I find my pet? That is the most heart wrenching question we get asked. If you do everything in this guide and use EVERY resource available to you, you have the best chance possible. The prognosis for finding a lost pet is highly variable, and depends on many factors, including: Early response, effective planning and implementation of the plan, pet's temperament, pet's health, pet's breed, appearance of the pet, if the pet was wearing identification, if the pet is microchipped, weather, terrain, population density, circumstances surrounding the pet's escape or disappearance, how quickly the search is abandoned, how bonded the pet owner is with the pet, false assumptions or misinformation, owner behavior, and rescuer behavior.

How long should I look for my pet? The answer to this question is very personal. Some people search forever, some have to call off the search after only a few days. I encourage you to continue aggressively searching for your lost cat for at least 6 weeks. There are many news reports of cats being found months and even years after they went missing. Don't give up!

My cat is old or sick. Did my cat go off to die? We often get senior pet searches where an owner guesses that their pet possibly went off to die. The sad truth is that many of these pets just went missing and the owner will not find them because they give-up before they even started a search for their lost pet. More often than not one of three things happened. Either, the cat wandered away, and got disorientated and kept going. Another scenario is that they got picked-up by a person who thought that the cat was abandoned or in distress. Finally, they have a minor injury or illness, or possibly dementia or a seizure, and go off because they want to be left alone – not because they are going to die. Your pet could have a minor health problem like a bad tooth! Just like you don't want to be bothered when you are sick, they don't want to be bothered either!

Chapter 9 - When You Find Your Pet

If you have found your pet – YAHOO! You have conducted an effective search and followed a plan. Take your pet to the veterinarian and have them checked out to make sure they did not eat anything poisonous, or have any injuries. You should take your pet to the veterinarian even if you don't see anything visually wrong. Some injuries can be hidden under fur, or there could be internal injuries. Some pets act as if they were never lost, while others behave differently for months or even years. Please call us and let us know that your cat is back home safe – we try to track how lost cats are located so we can help other people find their lost cats in the future.

Create a plan in advance as the one suggested below! Hopefully your pet will never go missing again, but just in case create an emergency action list and keep it handy in house or car. The action list should include the information found in this document.

Please follow the following steps to keep your pet safe in the future:

1. **Make sure your pet ALWAYS has a collar and tags on.** Check your pet's neck frequently to ensure that the collar is in place and that the your pet's identification tags are legible. Your pet's ID tags should have your current phone number, in addition to a back-up phone number, such as a work number, friend's phone number, or neighbor. This way if you move or your phone is out of order there is an alternative number. Add "Reward for Return – Recompensa" to the tags.
2. **Get your pet microchipped or tattooed.** If your pet carries a microchip or a tattoo have that number with you all the time (in your wallet).
3. **Make sure you have recent photos of your pet.**
4. **Create a pet file** on your computer with pet web directories and have all the local pet authorities' telephone numbers also in print.
5. **Keep an updated map of your area** with your emergency pet kit.
6. **Frequently check** your locks, doors, windows and fence for possible escape passages.
7. **Do not trust strangers** and never leave your pet unattended with strangers.
8. **Register your pet** to the available services of your area; you will save precious time if your pet becomes lost.
9. **Get to know your neighbors.** They might see your pet out roaming before you even know that your pet is missing!

Pet Detective Approved Products:

www.tazlab.com

www.HomeAgainID.com

www.safedogid.com

www.AvidMicrochip.com

www.coyoteroller.com

www.animalavenue.net

www.nordicnaturals.com

www.nuvet.com/25035

www.purrfectfence.com

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About Us & Credentials

Annalisa Berns, professional Pet Detective, is a certified Missing Animal Response Technician. She works as a professional Pet Detective in the Southern California area, but helps people locate their lost pets all over the United States. She can be contacted online at www.PetSearchAndRescue.com She is available for guest lectures, demonstrations and seminars. She takes finding lost pets seriously, and has extensive training and work credentials. Her credentials include:

Guest speaker at the annual Western Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas/Feb. 2008 on Pet Loss Prevention for pet services providers. Guest speaker at the San Diego Humane Society and for multiple breed groups, pet rescue groups and pet service provider groups.

National Search Dog Alliance Member & Member Education Board NSDA.

Missing Pet Partnership Member www.MissingPetPartnership.com

Trailing Dog Trainer - has trained multiple search dogs. One certified through Kat Albrecht, retired K9 police handler. Helped train one 8 month puppy successfully running 2 day old trails, 1/4 mile long. Puppy successfully established a DOT and trap was set in this exact area for lost dog. Dog was trapped 1 ½ days later at this location determined by the Bloodhound Puppy!

Trained and certified Missing Animal Response Technician (Pet Detective) in 2005 with ex-policewoman Kat Albrecht and Search and Rescue groups. Coached and critiqued by Butte County SAR members. Training seminar with Marcia Koenig.

Animal Movement / Tracking Training with published author.

Worked closely with Private Investigator Susan McCrary on lost pet cases.

Only certified Scent Specific Search Dog to find lost pets in Southern CA.

As seen in media: Featured in new book "Dog Detectives, Finding Fido" and "Finding Bella," local news, including news in Palm Springs, San Diego, Ventura County, Los Angeles, etc., as seen on the web and as seen in newspapers such as San Diego Union Tribune, Ventura County Star, Foothill Sentinel, Whittier Tribune, etc. Published writer about missing pet issues in the Foothill Newspaper.

Over three years actively working lost pet cases.

Numerous finds - live and deceased.

Training references contact information available upon request to clients.

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Some feedback about Annalisa Berns and Pet Search and Rescue:

"Annalisa and Lilly were extremely efficient and professional. I really feel that they presented me with several useful plans-of-action and recommendations. Within only 30 minutes, I was reassured and feel they worked efficiently enough without wasting time. Thank you!" - Kerry in La Mesa

"No doubt Lilly can find pets. She did a wonderful job." - Becky in El Cajon

"Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it. I cannot thank you enough for giving me the extra motivation that I needed. THANK YOU!" - Carrie in Chula Vista

"I thought you would want to know that Gabby came home last night! And... you were right. She was two apartments down, somewhere I had never looked hiding, not responding to my calls, and terrified. Luckily, she is back home and safe. Thank you for all of your helpful advice!" –Stefanie in San Diego

"I wanted to take this opportunity to express my thanks and sincere appreciation to Annalisa Berns and her search dog Lilly. They did an outstanding job. Annalisa was extremely responsive to my very first phone call about my missing pug, Cookie. She was compassionate and focused. Within minutes of starting the search Lilly picked up my dog's scent and directed us right to the person that found him." – Shari in Clairemont

"I am very happy to say that we recovered our dog. He was lost for almost a month. It was emotional for us being able to complete our family once again. I thank you very much for your concern and thoughts. Again, I thank you." – Lourdes in San Diego

"Congratulations on all your searches!! I can't believe how many success stories you have to your credit already!! Keep up the good work you two!!!" – Jill

"I can't tell you how much I appreciate your concern and assistance. It is heartwarming. Thank you." – Sandra in Louisiana

"Thank you for your help, for your valuable and successful information. Annie has been found. Thank you again. Your advice was priceless." - Robin and Gary in Lake Tahoe

For more client feedback, testimonials and cases we have worked, please go online to: www.PetSearchAndRescue.com Client contact information is available upon request to clients.

Pet Search and Rescue

FORENSIC FUR SAMPLE ANALYSIS INFORMATION FORM – WWW.PETSEARCHANDRESCUE.COM

INFORMATION

Expert forensic scientist, with a Master of Forensic Sciences from Antioch University and over 25 years working as a forensic scientist for the US Government, will perform an analysis of fur samples found during your search for your lost pet to see if it is a possible match. Scientist reviews TWO samples of fur – one “control” sample known to be from your pet and collected from home, and an “unknown” sample you located during the search for your pet. This can help tell if your pet is hiding in a specific location or was in a fight. If a pet met with an accident, this service can confirm if it was the missing pet. Sadly, sometimes the only remains that are located are a sample of fur and sometimes remains are not visually identifiable, as with an accident with a car. You will receive the results from the analysis, telling you if the samples are “Consistent” or “Not Consistent.” If the sample is “Not Consistent” it is definitely not your pet. However, if the sample is “Consistent” then there is a very high probability that the fur is from your pet. While the testing that our forensic scientist performs is not as definitive as a DNA test (which is cost prohibitive to most people), the test results are accurate enough to be admissible in a court of law. Some pets with identical fur may be difficult to match. For example, exotic pets with unique coloring can be matched more confidently than say, a common black cat. NOTE: To keep costs down we do not follow chain of custody procedures, thus although fiber examinations in general are admissible in a court of law, the fur examinations that we offer is NOT admissible in court. If you feel that you need your case processed for court purposes, please contact us for a quote.

DIRECTIONS

Collect Control Sample – Find a sample of your pet’s fur. A minimum of 17 strands are required, a few tufts are plenty. Usually samples can easily be located on bedding, brushes, clothing, carpet, sofa cushions, windowsills, etc. Use plastic gloves, tweezers or a clear plastic bag to handle the samples. You can also use clear packing tape (NOT scotch tape) to “lift” the fur sample. Please do not use your bare hands. Put the samples inside an envelope or clear plastic Ziploc bag. Label the sample “control sample” along with your pet’s name. Use tape to seal the bag or envelope securely. Please let wet samples air dry before packing. Do not permit other pets around the samples, if possible.

Collect Unknown Sample – Collect the sample using plastic gloves, tweezers or a plastic bag. You can also use clear packing tape (NOT scotch tape) to “lift” the fur sample. Please do not use your bare hands. Put the unknown sample inside an envelope or clear plastic Ziploc bag. Label the sample “unknown sample” along with a location where found, such as “on fence” or “behind house.” Use tape to seal the bag or envelope securely. If you find multiple samples at different locations, please place each sample in its own bag or envelope. See below for additional costs of analysis. Please let wet samples air dry before packing. Do not permit other pets around the samples, if possible.

Prepare Case Information & Payment – Please include a color picture of the missing pet and any special instructions. Complete payment information and order form below. Print and include with the samples.

Shipping – Please ship Priority Mail or faster to: Pet Search and Rescue, 1121 Wendy, POBox 633, Big Bear City, CA 92314. Please do not require signature as we are often out of the office on searches. Please see below for Priority Service. Turn-around time depends on case load. Please contact us if you have a rush order. Samples will be returned upon request ONLY. Contact information: Pet Search and Rescue, aberns@hotmail.com 800-925-2410

Pet Search and Rescue

FORENSIC FUR SAMPLE ANALYSIS INFORMATION FORM – WWW.PETSEARCHANDRESCUE.COM

CASE EXAMPLES

Case Example: A dog went missing in the Hollywood Hills. A large amount of fur was found that looked like the dog's fur. It was sent for Fur Sample Analysis. It came back "Not Consistent." Without the fur sample the owner would probably have given up. However, they knew their dog was still alive and found him soon after!

Case Example: A cat went missing in the Los Angeles area. Search Dogs found remains of an animal that was hit by a car, but the remains were too degraded to visually identify if it was the missing cat. After Fur Sample Analysis, it was found that the fur was "Consistent." The owner was sad, but relieved to know the truth so she could stop searching day and night for her beloved pet.

Case Example: A cat went missing in Orange County, on a trip with her owner from Texas. Search Dogs found fur and blood in a huge field with coyotes in the area. The missing cat was a tabby, so to the naked eye the fur looked like rabbit. The findings of the analysis were "Consistent," meaning that the fur matched the cat, not a rabbit. The owner was devastated, but was able to return home to Texas knowing what happened to her pet.

Case Example: A cat went missing in San Diego, CA. Search Dogs found fur in a nearby field. However, the cat was black and white and the fur looked like it might be from a skunk. The fur was sent away and found to be "Consistent" with the lost cat, and not skunk. The owners were sad, but wanted to know the truth.

Pet Search and Rescue

FORENSIC FUR SAMPLE ANALYSIS ORDER FORM – WWW.PETSEARCHANDRESCUE.COM

PET CASE DETAILS – CONTACT INFORMATION			
Name:		Phone:	
Address:			
Email:			
Pet Details:	Indicate if you are not the pet's owner. Include pet's name, breed, age, weight, and date missing:		

ORDER FORM – PLEASE INDICATE REQUESTED SERVICES WITH A "X"				
Service ID #	Service Name & Description	Fee	Service Requested	Total
1-C	Forensic Fur Sample Analysis: 2 Samples Only – 1 Control & 1 Unknown	\$150		
2-C	Additional Fur Sample Analysis: Please add \$15 per additional Unknown sample.	\$15 per additional sample		
3-C	Expedite / Rush Service: Priority Service (Please call first.)	\$100 additional		
4-C	Additional Pets on Control Sample: Please add \$15 per additional pet in the household that could be on the Control sample.	\$15 per additional pet in household on control sample		
5-C	Specialized Forensic Services (Please call first.) 2 hour minimum.	\$150 per hour		
			TOTAL:	

PAYMENT INFORMATION – CHECK	
Make checks payable to: Pet Search and Rescue. \$25 fee plus costs on all returned checks.	

PAYMENT INFORMATION – CREDIT CARD – VISA AND MASTERCARD ONLY PLEASE.					
Name on Card:					
Billing Address:					
Credit Card Number:					
Expiration Date:		3 Digit Code: (back of card)		Payment Amount:	
Authorization Signature:					

Contact information: Pet Search and Rescue aberns@hotmail.com 800-925-2140
 Mail Samples and Order Form to: Pet Search and Rescue, 1121 Wendy, POBox 633, Big Bear City, CA 92314
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