

Lost & Found at the Animal Rescue League: Guide to Making Reunions a Reality

The Animal Rescue League of Western PA works to find adoptable homes for thousands of pets each year. Additionally, the shelter works to reunite lost pets with their owners.

The best advice regarding missing pets is for owners to take steps that will prevent an animal from getting lost in the first place. *Should you lose a pet, if you have taken steps to make your pet easily identifiable, your chances of a quick reunion increase greatly.*

Before a Pet Goes Missing:

1. Microchips make a difference. A microchip is the BEST way to increase the odds of finding a lost pet. All animals adopted from the ARL already have an implanted microchip. If your pet is not chipped, the [ARL Veterinary Clinic](#) can implant a chip on your animal. Be sure to call the microchip company to update your contact information. Keep indoor animals indoors and keep them secure when walking or transporting.
2. Update and record the tags on your pets. Collars and tags can work to reunite pets and owners- if the details are correct. Tags should include the pet's name and your current phone number. Write down the numbers of any rabies tags, city licenses, etc. Every piece of information can help to find a lost pet faster.
3. Have several current photos of your pet available. Try and take a few that are close ups of the animals face, and of the entire body. You want to be sure that you can show photos that clearly depict the pet if you need to make a lost pet poster.
4. Keep pets enclosed and under control. Periodically check your home's fences and gates to be sure there are no new ways for your pet to get out of your yard. Also, keep pets on leashes or carriers when transporting them- even if it's from the house to the car. It is also helpful to train dogs and cats (yes, cats can be trained) to STOP if they start to get away and COME to you when you tell them to do so. For more information on training your pets to obey commands, contact the ARL Behavior Line at 412-661-6452 x272.
5. Spay or neuter your pets. This reduces the roaming urge and ensures that a lost pet will not contribute to the unwanted pet population should it be on the loose. Plus, your pet will be happier and healthier!

If Your Pet Is Missing:

1. Keep a lost pet journal. Start with the exact moment you realized your pet was missing or when your pet ran off. With any luck, you will find your pet quickly, but it will become important to note times and dates should your search become extended. Note times and days that you make reports, receive calls with leads, etc.
2. Make a report. Contact your local animal shelters, your city or community animal control unit, local veterinarian to report the pet missing. The Animal Rescue League's Lost & Found department can be reached at 412-661-6452 x216. Visit the ARL Lost & Found website for more phone numbers and places to call.

3. Make flyers and post them. When you make your poster, you will be glad to have current photos of your pet (as suggested above). [The Animal Rescue League provides poster tips and a Lost Pet template that you can customize and print.](#) Post your flyers throughout your neighborhood and be sure to give copies to your local animal shelters. The more people that see your pet, the better chance that someone will recognize the animal when they see it.

4. Use technology tools. There are many community websites that feature virtual bulletin boards or posting capabilities (for example, www.craigslist.org). Use online newspapers classified sections to post in the "Lost" section. Send an email blast to contacts and ask them to forward the message. It doesn't hurt to have extra people aware of your search. If you are on Twitter, then tweet about your lost pet.

5. Think like your pet. Is there somewhere in your neighborhood that is of particular interest to your pet? Has your pet gotten away from you before and run to a particular neighbor's yard or porch? Are you nearby a park where you take your dog for walks? If you can think of these places, you may very well find your pet.

If You Find a Missing Pet:

1. Be careful. The animal could be very scared and attempt to bite if it feels threatened. If you think you are in the presence of a lost pet, you can try to get it to come to you, but do not chase it. If the animal will not come to you, contact your local animal control agency and make a report.

2. Look for identification. If you are able to get the animal to go with you, check for tags- preferably with the owner's information. If the pet's name and owner information tag is missing, look for a license or microchip tag- these numbers can be used to track down an owner.

3. Make a report by calling your local animal shelters to report the animal that you have found. Be sure to make a note of what time, date, and exact location where the animal was found. If possible, take a picture that you can use to make a "Found" poster, or at least pass on to these organizations. The Animal Rescue League's Lost & Found Department can take your report at 412-661-6452 x216.

4. Chip check. Take the animal to a veterinarian or animal shelter and let them scan for a microchip. If there is a microchip, a special scanning tool will display a number- that number will correspond to an owner in the chip manufacturer's database.

5. Now what? The ARL Lost & Found Department can provide more details for steps that can be taken if you have found a lost pet that cannot immediately be identified.

**For additional information or make a report contact:
[Animal Rescue League Lost & Found](#) at 412-661-6452 x216**

The following posters are samples to help you get started. The Animal Rescue League offers a customizable lost pet poster maker that you may use to generate and print posters at www.animalrescue.org in the Lost & Found section. Good luck with your search!



Animal Rescue League
of Western Pennsylvania

LOST CAT



Pumpkin (Fluffer)

Sex: Male or Female

Breed: See "Flyer Guide" for tips

Age: # Months/Years Old **Size:** Size, Weight **Color/Coat:** Color, length/type of coat

**Distinguishing
Marks:**

List other noticeable and permanent physical traits, separate them with a comma. Spayed/Neutered. Implanted Microchip.

Other

Any additional info on pet's appearance when lost. For example, wearing a color/fabric collar with tags.

Identifiers:

Missing From:

Neighborhood: Street Name (Block or closest cross street)

Missing Since:

Day, Month Date, Year (Time of Day)

**Additional
Details:**

Keep this section brief. But, be sure to note anything that would help to locate your pet or any important tips on handling the animal if found.

If you have any information about **PET'S NAME:**

PLEASE CALL NAME @ 412-555-1111

LOST DOG



SKIPPY

(also answers to Skip)

Sex: Male

Breed: Chocolate Lab

Age: 4 Years

Size: Large, 80lbs

Color/Coat: Solid Brown, Short Hair

Distinguishing

Marks:

Other

Identifiers:

Missing From:

Missing Since:

Additional

Details:

Floppy ears. Long, thick tail that curls slightly upward. Small scar on top of nose.

Neutered. Skippy has an implanted microchip for identification.

Last seen wearing a black nylon collar (see photo) with tags. Nails recently trimmed.

Shadyside: South Negley Avenue (near Walnut Street)

Monday, February 2, 2009 (Evening)

Skippy is very friendly and likes to explore. If he finds his way into your yard, he may come to you when called by name and offered a treat or a toy.

If you have any information about SKIPPY:

PLEASE CALL JANE @ 412-555-1111