



ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE SHELTER & WILDLIFE CENTER

Lost & Found Guide: Making Reunions a Reality

In addition to finding good homes for thousands of adoptable pets each year, the Animal Rescue League Shelter (ARL) works tirelessly to reunite lost pets with their owners every single day. Taking proper steps to make your pet identifiable and prevent him or her from getting lost in the first place is key to ensuring a happy, healthy best friend.

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 for a reasonable fee. Be sure to update your contact information with our shelter and the microchip company!
2. **Update and record the tags on your pets.** Collars and tags can work to reunite pets and owners, but only if the details are current and correct. Tags should include your pet's name and your current phone number. Write down the numbers of any rabies tags, licenses, etc. Every piece of information can help to find a lost pet faster.
3. **Have several current photos of your pet available.** Take pictures from different angles, a few of which are close-ups of the animal's face, and some of the entire body. You'll 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.** That means keeping your pets indoors and on a leash or in a carrier when walking or transporting – even if it's just from the house to the car. 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. It is also helpful to train dogs and even cats 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 our Program Director at jbarnard@animalrescue.org or call 412-345-7300 x214
5. **Spay or neuter your pets!** We know you've heard this one before! Fixing your pet reduces their urge to roam and ensures that a lost pet will not contribute to the unwanted pet population should it ever get lost. Plus, your pet will be happier and healthier!

If Your Pet is Missing:

1. **Keep a lost pet journal.** Start with the exact moment that you realized your pet was missing or when your pet ran away. Note times and days that you make reports, receive calls with leads, etc. When looking for your pet, it will become important to note times and dates should your search become extended.



2. **File a lost report & check local shelters.** Contact and visit your local animal shelters, your city or community animal control unit, and local veterinarians to report the pet missing and to look for him or her. The Animal Rescue League's Lost & Found department can be reached at 412-345-7300 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 you 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 if they see him or her.
4. **Use the internet and social media.** There are many community websites like Craigslist.org that feature virtual bulletin boards or posting capabilities. Use the classified sections on online newspapers to post in the "Lost" section. Post your lost pet on Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks and ask your friends and neighbors to spread the word. You should also check the [Lost Dogs Pittsburgh Facebook page](#). It doesn't hurt to have extra people aware of your search.
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 near a park where you take your dog for walks? Check these locations and you may easily 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. 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. Note that even if an animal does not have a microchip tag, it still may have a microchip!
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 412-345-7300 x216. You can also bring the found pet to our shelter to be scanned for a microchip, or to be taken in.

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 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. You should also check the [Lost Dogs Pittsburgh Facebook page](#).

**For additional information or to make a report contact:
Animal Rescue League Lost & Found at 412-661-6452 x216**

The ARL 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!