



## Locating a Lost Dog

**PANICKED DOGS:** When experiencing the terror of an earthquake or loud fireworks, some dogs may look for a hiding place so make certain to search in potential hiding places like under a vehicle or inside a garage or open building. Dogs can also become trapped in rubble in an earthquake but usually that is if the building collapse on them. If they were fenced or were able to escape from a building, they will most likely run and may be found a distance from home. Many dogs will be so terrified from the sound of fireworks or an earthquake that they will not even come to their owners! While some dogs will ultimately calm down and then approach people, other dogs will continue to run from everyone. In many cases, people have tried to call the dog as they looked directly at the dog and walked towards it, an action that is dominate and frightening to a dog that is in the “fight or flight” mode.

**Do NOT Call a Panicked Dog!** One of the worst things that you can do is CALL a stray dog or panicked dog! That’s because if too many people have already tried to capture the dog, calling him becomes a “trigger” that can cause him to automatically take off in fear when anyone, including his owner, calls him. Instead, make some type of other noise like clearing your throat or fake a sneeze to alert the dog to your presence. Then look away, which is a submissive gesture. You can even fake like you’re eating food on the ground, and we suggest that you have a baggie of smelly treats like pieces of hotdog or liver treats. Sit down on the ground, or even lay flat on your back and pat your chest. Do anything other than staring straight at your dog while walking towards him!

WHEN YOU FIXATE ALL OF YOUR ATTENTION ON YOUR DOG AND THAT DOG IS IN A “FIGHT OR FLIGHT” MODE, HE WILL BECOME EVEN MORE TERRIFIED THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO CATCH HIM! So work to get his attention and then do something with food as you sit or lay down flat and work to attract him to come to you.

You should also know that when dogs are in a full fight or flight mode and their adrenaline is flowing, the olfactory section of their brain closes down. That’s why sometimes when you try to feed a hotdog to a panicked dog it won’t eat it. So sometimes the food will work, sometimes it won’t. It depends on the dog and what level of panic he is in. Also, some dogs will immediately recognize their owner by their scent but other dogs won’t.

1. Search your neighborhood both on foot and by car. Dogs are crepuscular, meaning they’re most active at dawn and dusk. Search at other times as well, but focus on those two time periods. Cover the paths where you normally walk your dog, as well as surrounding areas. Draw a circle on a map with your home at the center. Extend the radius out a few miles so you can cover the area in a comprehensive, methodical way.
2. Grab a leash, and take along some really stinky, yummy food you know your dog will love. If your dog has a favorite toy, bring that along as well. Toys that make noise, such as ones that squeak or jingle, are best. Whether you’re walking or driving, go slowly and shout out your dog’s name in a happy voice. (If you’re in a vehicle, having someone else drive so you’re free to shout

\*Information in this article has been provided by our friends at Missing Pet Partnership. For even more helpful tips please visit their home page at [www.missingpetpartnership.org](http://www.missingpetpartnership.org).



out the window is advised). Assuming your dog is familiar with the phrase, “Wanna go for a ride?” say your dog’s name followed the phrase, uttered in the same tone you’d normally use. If your dog is trained to come when called, try calling their name and then giving the recall cue, also using the tone you’d normally use for the exercise.

3. If you have another dog, or have access to another dog yours is friends with, take that dog along on searches.
4. Bring a photo with you, and show it to everyone you pass. (If your dog is not currently lost, be sure to have a photo handy on your cell phone or printed out, just in case. You might also need it to claim your dog if he’s ever impounded at a shelter or humane society.)
5. If your dog is not friendly with people, you can’t very well ask anyone to try to contain him; in that case, give out the number of your local animal control agency, and your cell number, and ask people to call immediately if they spot your dog. Even if your dog is people-friendly, tell people that if they do see him, not to chase him. Ask that they turn their body to the side (and even crouch down with the body turned sideways) and clap gently, using a happy voice to lure your dog to them. Ask that if they have a yard or other containment area, to coax your dog inside and then call you. Let people know if your dog is dog-friendly, in case they have a dog of their own. And don’t forget to mention the reward; positive reinforcement works for people, too.
6. Be sure all of your neighbors are aware of the situation. If you feel it’s safe, knock on doors in your area, explain the situation, and leave people with a flyer.
7. Post “Lost” flyers all around your neighborhood, using the map you marked up as a guide. Don’t crowd the flyer with text, as it should be easily readable by passing drivers. Include a photo, preferably in color. The word “REWARD” should appear in large letters. It’s also a good idea to add the phrase, “Needs medication.” This not only imparts a sense of urgency, but dissuades those who might believe in a “Finders, Keepers” policy from “adopting” your dog. It’s best to have small tear-off tags with your phone number at the bottom of the flyer, so that people take a tag rather than tearing down the entire flyer.
8. Place a Lost Dog ad in your local papers, and be sure to search daily through the Found ads. Do the same for Craig’s List online, and any other classifieds sites local to your area.
9. Give flyers to your local postal workers, and delivery drivers for services like UPS and FedEx. They’re the ones who are all over your neighborhood daily, so they have the best chance of spotting your dog. Give flyers to kids who are playing out in the street, and make sure they know there’s a reward. Alert local pet sitters, since they too are out and about in the community, and normally have other dogs with them that might attract your dog. Give flyers to anyone you can think of who spends time around your neighborhood—bus drivers, taxi drivers, highway workers, utility workers, etc. Tell local trainers too, in case someone decides to keep your dog and then get him trained. The more people you tell, the better the chance someone will call you when your dog is spotted.

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10. Post flyers at your local veterinary offices, emergency clinics, shelters, humane societies, groomers, pet supply stores, kennels, any other dog-related businesses, and dog parks. Post too at laundromats, supermarkets, community bulletin boards, and anywhere else that will allow it.

11. Spread the virtual word! Share your information on social media such as Twitter and Facebook. Be sure to include a photo.

12. Let local rescue groups know, too. If your dog is purebred, someone might try to turn him in to the breed rescue group rather than dropping him off at a shelter. Even if he's a mixed breed, make sure local rescue groups have your phone number and a description/photo of your dog.

13. Search your local shelter, and any that are within roaming distance, daily. Don't just call—you must show up in person. Often the office staffer who answers the phones will not know what dogs are in the actual facility. Also, your dog might have been marked down as the wrong breed upon intake. Be sure to search not only all of the runs (they may have misidentified the gender—it happens), but the medical area as well. If your dog was hit by a car or otherwise injured, that's where he'll be, and yet most shelter officials won't tell you to look there. Find out the number of days your shelter holds lost dogs before they become available for adoption (or worse, euthanized), and be sure that you or someone shows up within that time frame on an ongoing basis.

14. While at the shelter, search through the "found" books or postings. Someone might have your dog at home and doesn't want to turn him in.

15. Search all of the places you can think of that a dog might find attractive. Local dog parks, fields that contain rabbits or squirrels, woods, garbage dumps, and dumpsters behind restaurants are all good bets. When you search on foot, be sure to keep an eye on bushes and under cars, as those are common hiding places for a frightened dog, or one who is napping.

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