

What to do if your cat has gone missing

- Make up flyers and post them on every street corner, call local shelters and Animal Control
- Be sure to give them recent pictures; visit them everyday
- Check with local vet offices
- Call ER vets such as VSEC (215.750.7884), Cares (215.750.2774), Bucks County Vets (215.918.2200) and UPenn (215.898.4680)
- Go door to door, the cat most likely did not stray far from home
- Place flyers at the local WAWA, supermarkets, local vet offices, etc
- If your cat is microchipped call the company and report the cat missing
- Get your rescue involved if you adopted.
- Place ads on craigslist
- Try www.petfinder.com — classifieds AND LOOK at the shelter animals that are available for adoption; your pet might show up there
- Other sites of interest include: www.zachalert.org, www.pets911.com, and www.dogdetective.com
- Contact microchip companies, if your pet is chipped: [HomeAgain](http://HomeAgain.com), [24PetWatch](http://24PetWatch.com) and [AVID](http://AVID.com).

Some helpful hints:

- **Indoor-Only Cats:** The territory for an indoor-only cat is the inside of the home where it lives. When an indoor-only cat escapes outdoors, it is "displaced" into unfamiliar territory. Usually they will look for the first place that will offer concealment and protection. Their instinctive response is to HIDE IN SILENCE because that is their primary protection from predators. How long they remain in that hiding place and what they do from there is dependant upon their temperament. The investigative question when an indoor-only cat escapes outdoors is: WHERE IS THE CAT HIDING?
- You may need to borrow a safe trap from a local rescue group or animal shelter and put it in a very safe place near your house where it can be set and monitored frequently. You could put a piece of unwashed clothing from the cat's favorite person and place it over the trap so that it will feel secure going in. Place food inside the trap only.
- Log on to www.petfinder.com and list your pet as missing. I believe that you can also add a picture. You can go to the home page of their website and go to locate shelter section on the left hand side of the page and type in city, state and the zip code which I do not know. Then a whole list of shelters will come up in that area. You can probably email a picture of your missing pet. You can also check the shelters on their websites and search for a picture of your missing pet. Please remember that shelters are always very busy and may not have an opportunity to list your pet on their website right away. Some of the shelters provide an email address, so you can email a picture of your missing pet. You should follow up with a telephone call to each shelter to file an official missing pet report.
- Petfinder.com will allow you to sign up to receive an email if an animal matching the description of your pet is posted on their site. Sign up for this service and enter your pet's information. Your pet may be posted as found or as available for adoption. (Some finders do not want to turn an animal over to a shelter that euthanizes unadoptable animals. Shelters have no choice but to euthanize unadoptable animals when their facility is full.) All "no kill" organizations in this area operate with foster homes or board animals at small, private venues.

- If you have the time available I would check with the shelters in your area or the area where you're pet went missing. REMEMBER YOUR DESCRIPTION OF YOUR PET MAY BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE PERSON THAT LOGGED YOUR PET INTO THEIR SYSTEM. So if you have time you may want to check the shelters by physically going to them. Ask a friend or relative to help you.
- YOUR PET MAY ALSO BE AT A SHELTER CLOSEST TO THE HOME OR WORKPLACE OF A FINDER. I CANNOT EMPHASIZE ENOUGH THE NEED TO VISIT YOUR LOCAL SHELTERS AS OFTEN AS THEIR STAFF RECOMMENDS.
- When you contact shelters, get directions to their facility and find out their policies on coming to check for your pet. The receptionist will page for a kennel attendant to accompany you to the holding and adoption areas. Shelters also have an isolation area for animals under the doctor's care; ask them to check this area as well. Bring a picture or vet records so that they can check these areas and confirm your ownership. The shelters want to make sure they are pairing lost pets and their owners; not falling victim to someone trying to get their hands on a highly adoptable animal by claiming they lost a pet matching the description they provide.
- Plan on visiting local facilities as often as their practices suggest. It is important to avoid the euthanasia or adoption of your pet. When you make your phone call to get this information, make an official lost report as they recommend as well. Don't assume an email or fax is the most efficient way to communicate your need to shelter staff. Make sure you update your lost report weekly with the shelter. Be sure to check sick/isolations rooms at the shelter.
- Check with local police or animal control officers in your township. You may also want to check with animal control officers from adjoining townships.

Important information when trying to locate your pet:

- Where the animal was lost: A minimum is state, county, (not country), city, and street name, with cross streets. The name of your housing development is not enough.
- When the animal was lost: Please give the date, and a general time of day, if known.
- A description of the animal, including color and markings: Please be sure to include age, approximate size and/or weight and sex. Be sure to mention if the animal was wearing tags or is tattooed or micro-chipped. Your pet's name would also be very helpful. Please indicate whether or not your pet is approachable by a stranger or whether they should notify you first. It is also important to mention whether your pet is spayed or neutered; is your cat declawed. Giving a breed or species name is not enough. Not everyone knows what a conure looks like and or what color you mean when you say a dog is blue or a cat is red.
- *A PICTURE OF YOUR PET IS VERY HELPFUL*
- Contact Information: You must include contact information. Please be sure to include your name and email address. You should include your telephone numbers and the best time of day to reach you. You may also want to include another person if for some reason you are not available.
- Other information: If your offering a reward, this is where it would be mentioned. The circumstances of how your animal was lost can be very helpful. For instance, if your dog was frightened by fireworks, he may have spent quite a while running. If you're animal mats easily, or likes to roll in the mud, that may help.
- List your pet every single day on craigslist in both the lost and found section and the pets section. Once the initial information is registered, I think that it is fairly easy to keep updating.
- Check the lost and found section and the pets section of craigslist every day for found pets, pets for adoption. Some animals go right into foster homes because the shelters are overcrowded.

- You may also want to check local vets in the area and leave a flier with your pet's picture and your contact information, including a telephone number. Ask family, friends and neighbors for help. Also check the local after-hours pet emergency clinics.
- You can log onto www.lostandpound.com and list your pet as missing there also. You can also search the found section for your missing pet.
- You can also log onto www.futurebestfriend.com and list your pet there as missing also. You can also browse their found section for your pet.
- Ask family, friends, and neighbors to help you search for your pet as soon as you realize your pet is missing. Also speak with people that walk dogs in your neighborhood. Walk, bike, drive, or jog through your neighborhood every day and more than once to find your missing pet.
- Give your mail carrier, garbage man and pizza delivery drivers a copy of your lost pet poster. These carriers travel your neighborhood 6-7 days a week.
- You may also want to post a picture of your pet on fliers, be sure to include your telephone number, distribute them to neighbors. You should post them in high traffic areas like telephone poles, pet store windows, groomers, grocery stores, schools, etc. Make sure they are visible and easy to read from a moving car.
- Check with other area SPCAs. The animal may have crossed the county line and may have been taken to another shelter
- Place an ad in the local newspaper – be sure to also check them for someone locating your pet in the Lost/Found Section.
- Try to leave something outside with your scent on it (clothing unwashed) outside, your pet may find its way home. If you lost your pet away from home, it might be best to return to the site where you were separated at quiet hours and try locating them then. Be sure to stop, be quiet and listen for faint cries from your pet. If they are frightened they might remain in hiding. Be sure to bring a flashlight with you. If at all possible bring someone with you for safety reasons.
- Leave their litter box outside to help them find their way home.
- Unfortunately, you may also want to check with the local sanitation department. If the animal is dead, they may have been notified to remove the body.

Useful Online Sites

- www.petrescue.com/library/find-pet.htm - for search suggestions
- www.catsinthebag.org search suggestions about missing cats
- www.lostapet.org information about how to search based on behaviors
- www.fidofinder.com a directory of lost dogs
- www.911parrotalert.com information on lost and found parrots all around the world and offer support and guidance to members
- www.petharbor.com – file lost report and create lost posters for your missing pet.
- www.findtoto.com
- www.homeagain.org
- www.missingpetpartnership.org – helpful suggestions and they have additional information about hiring a pet detective. If you choose to do this, do not wait to long.
- <http://philadelphia.usadoglist.com/>
- www.PetRescue.com
- www.MissingPet.net
- www.LostPetNet.com
- www.helpmefindmypet.com