



Lost Dogs Illinois

Lost Dog Search Action Plan

Losing your dog is traumatic and overwhelming, but this search action plan will help you organize and conduct a search. Accidents happen, so do not waste time assigning blame, it only distracts from the common mission of finding your dog.

Look for your dog in your home/neighborhood immediately. Pass out your contact number to everyone you see while searching your neighborhood. If you don't find your dog immediately...

Before Starting Your Search:

The most important thing you can do for your dog right now is get the word out. Your job is making sure that everyone knows your dog is missing. You do this by handing out flyers, placing intersections and even "tagging" your car.

Searching is a team effort. However, one person needs to be the point person for coordination. Communication is key. Keep people updated on a daily basis by using email, "closed" Facebook page or free conference call service.

*Don't give up! Although most lost dogs are home within a few days, many dogs are found weeks or months after they are lost. **Remember you are your dog's advocate.***

Get Organized:

_ Organize all current information about the lost dog (name, breed, color and special markings, wearing a collar, tags, microchip, current picture, etc.)

_ Place a blanket the dog has used along with a dish of canned or tasty human food and bowl of water where he/she was last seen so your dog has something familiar to come back to & remain in the area. Also piece of clothing of the person who the dog is most bonded to. Maintain the site with fresh food water and scented clothing until your dog is found. During inclement weather use a crate and bungee cord the door back.

_ Mobilize your friends and family to assist you in getting the word out and searching for your dog. Exchange cell phone numbers for quick contact.

Remind your search team not to shout and chase your dog if they see him/her. This may make your dog feel threatened and panic. Tell them to quietly sit or lie down (humans generally don't lie on the ground - so it may invite curiosity), look away and lure the dog with tasty treats by throwing the treats to the side not directly at the dog. Each team member should carry tasty treats and a leash with them.

Create Flyers and Posters:

_ Print at least 200-300 full-page flyers to distribute to businesses and to post in public places where people will see it. Use ¼ page size template so you can fit four flyers to a page for use in residential areas.

_ Pass out flyers door to door or place in newspaper boxes and post in every business/public place. Talk to everyone about your missing dog. **Note: It is illegal to put flyers in and on mailboxes.** Go door to door with your flyer.

Consider using [USPS Every Door Direct Mail](#) to deliver your flyers.

_ Create posters using neon colored poster boards and post at intersections & your own front yard. Include a brief description, instructions “do not chase” and a contact number. Keep signs simple & easy to read.

[Examples](#)

_ Tag your car – a very visible marketing plan for your lost dog.

<http://www.missingpetpartnership.org/recovery-tagging.php>

Check out [How to Generate Sightings Album](#) for more ways to reach people about your missing dog.

When handing out flyers, be sure you and your search team talk to people about your dog. People will sympathize with you and tend to go that extra mile. Try to hit the highest concentration of people – locate a school or church nearest to where your dog escaped or latest sighting – pass out fliers at departure time. If your dog is shy/timid, it is important to tell people not to approach, call or chase your dog, that he/she is scared & confused – just call you immediately with a sighting. Always carry a leash and a quart bag of tasty treats with you at all times.

Change Your Home/Cell Voicemail Messages

Let callers know to leave a detailed message if they have sighted your dog:

“If you are calling about (your dog’s name), please leave your name, phone number along with what time, location (including street number or intersection as well as what direction my dog was going, thank you for calling”

Notify by Phone/Email or Fax (be sure to include jurisdictions that surround your town/county) **Be sure to visit in person your animal control and/or stray holding facilities to check the “found” dogs.**

_ Animal Control

_ Police/Sheriff’s Department

_ Animal service businesses

_ Microchip Company

_ Local shelters/Rescues

_ Veterinarians

_ Highway/public works department

Post to Internet Sites: (check other Lost Pet internet posting sites not listed here):

_ [Craigslist](#)

_ Animal Control FB pages

_ Your local shelter/rescue/

_ Neighborhood Facebook Pages

Be sure to check these sites for listings from people who found your dog or who may be trying to rehome a dog they have found.

****Social networking is important, but remember this alone will not bring your dog home.****

Place Print, Online and Radio Ads (Also be sure to check found dog ads):

- _ Area newspapers
- _ Radio stations

Maps (to help record sightings):

- _ Call local Chamber of Commerce or [Google Maps](#) to get a regional street map of area where dog is missing.

- _ Go to [googleearth.com](#), [maps.yahoo.com](#), or [maps.google.com](#) to get an aerial view of the area

- _ Divide map into sections. Highlight and assign each section to a volunteer to distribute flyers. Use 3 miles radius to start. If no sightings, expand the search area.

- _ Use a separate map to record sightings of the dog. Record the date, time and exact location of the each sighting. Suggestion: use an excel spreadsheet or spiral notebook to record sightings.

When you are looking at the aerial map, look for trails or paths that your dog may follow. Many will follow a river, railroad tracks, biking and walking trails. Look for the path of least resistance – think like a dog.

If No Sightings:

- _ Start from the beginning and expand your search area.

- _ Check Petfinder and Petango to see if your dog was surrendered to a shelter/rescue and has been put for adoption. Also check Craigs List Pet sections for dogs that are being rehome.

Trapping (if needed):

- _ For complete information on trapping, please read the [Humane Trapping](#) articles on our website or [LostDog Search – Trapping](#)

- _ Contact your local Animal Control Facility and/or shelter for a dog trap. Make sure the trap is large enough to fit your dog.

- _ Sites to buy traps: [Animal-Traps](#), or [Live Trap](#).

Websites for More Information:

- [Lost Dogs Illinois](#)
- [Lost Dog Search](#)
- [Lost Dogs of America](#)

Once Your Dog is Recovered:

Take your dog to a veterinarian to be examined.

Remove all flyers and posters. Take down web postings and discontinue ads. Let all agencies you contacted know the dog has been recovered and thank them for their assistance.

Contact Lost Dogs Illinois and complete the final status update form:

[Final Status Update Form](#)