



IF YOU HAVE FOUND A DOG

If you've noticed an unfamiliar dog in your area, try to judge the situation and consider the safety of the dog and of yourself. A frightened or injured dog may behave unpredictably. A sudden move may spook him, causing him to bolt into traffic or attack you. If the dog looks frightened, sick, injured or if for any reason you feel uneasy about the situation, stay away from him and notify local animal control authorities (local dog warden, your vet, a local rescue center).

If the dog appears approachable, remember to use caution and common sense. When approaching the dog, speak calmly and make sure he can see you at all times as you approach, and perhaps entice him to come to you by offering a morsel of food. Remember that although he might look approachable, you are still a stranger to him. Check him for ID tags or tattoos. Tattoos are often found inside the ear or on the inner legs.

One of the primary reasons why lost dogs are not reunited with their families is that the animal shelter is the first location where dog owners search for their lost dogs but it is typically the last location where found dogs are taken due to the fear that the dog will be euthanized. Very few municipal shelters have the resources available to house lost and stray animals more than three days. In Hackney, dogs not claimed within seven days will be transferred to Battersea Dogs Home. If you are not willing to leave the dog at the shelter, most shelters should allow you to foster (house) the dog while also filing a found report by providing the description, the location where you found it, and your contact information.

Assume, no matter how the dog behaves or what it looks like, that this dog is owned and loved by someone who wants the dog back. A loose, lost dog will lose weight, become dehydrated, obtain injuries, become matted, and pick up ticks, fleas, and burs in their fur. Never assume that the dog you found was dumped, abandoned, or homeless until you have concrete evidence or until all efforts to find an owner/guardian have failed.

Older people will not have an access to the internet or could have difficulties going out so please make sure there is no elderly people in your neighbourhood whose dog escaped before taking further actions. Ask your neighbours if they know found dog or heard about someone who lost their dog.

Look out for "lost dog notice" in your area. Many areas have 'lost and found pets' groups on Facebook, or Twitter so have a look to see if there is one for your neighbourhood. Vets and rescue centres also keep lost and found lists, so make sure you check with those local to you too.

Take found dog to the closest vet to have it scanned for a microchip. It's free service and if the dog is microchipped and lost, his owners will be informed immediately.

Don't release the dog to ANYONE until you are positive that you have found his or her rightful family!

Consider putting up a 'found dog' poster and giving your contact details so the owner can get in touch if they see it. Consider that the dog might have traveled quite far and the posters could be one mile away or more. Also consider that the dog may have escaped in the last few hours and the posters haven't gone up yet. Maybe the dog's owner is disabled and unable to create and hang posters. Don't be too descriptive. If someone calls to claim the dog you found make THEM tell YOU what their missing dog looks like. Ask the caller if the dog is licensed and/or microchipped. If it is, then ask to bring proof of that or photographs of the dog when you meet each other with the dog. If there is no paperwork or photos, then ask him or her to meet you at your veterinarian's office where you can have the dog scanned by your vet. If you don't meet at your vet's office, be sure to take a second person with you and make sure to meet in a public location. Let someone at home know exactly where you will be going.

If someone calls you claiming the ownership, remember not to ask leading questions like "Does your Poodle have a kink in its tail?" but instead ask open-ended questions like, "Describe your dog's tail". Make the caller give you a full description of the lost pet.