

## USEFUL THINGS YOU CAN DO IF YOUR LABRADOR IS LOST

### **We sometimes feel useless when we hear that a friend's dog is missing.**

We may be unable to join search parties being organised or do not live very close to the incident. However in reality, even if you're hundreds of miles away; as long as you have a phone and access to the internet, you can still help and advise your friends of appropriate action.

### **Listed below are some of these ways:**

- **Contact the dog warden** in case the dog has been found and handed in before the microchip company updates their systems. Details will be found through the local authority website. Also contacting neighbouring local authorities is an idea too, in case the dog has moved across local council borders.
- **Set up an account on Dog Lost ([doglost.co.uk](http://doglost.co.uk))** and register the dog. Get the following information from the owner if at all possible:
  - Description of the dog, including any identifying marks, age, size, neutered, name, colour, collar, sex, etc.
  - Where was the dog lost? The more precise the location description the better.
  - Microchip number (if available).
  - A clear photograph (if the owner is on Facebook, you can probably get this from their page).

For a contact number, use both the owner's details as they will be out searching, as well as your own number as you are in a place where you can keep your phone fully charged.

Once registration is complete, **Dog Lost** will populate a poster that can be put up in the area the dog was lost (you can also get them printed and passed on to friends). If you don't have access to a laminator, put them in upside-down poly-pockets so they won't be ruined in wet weather. Posters can also be used as flyers, for distributing to local properties and putting up in local establishments.

### **Keep updating the Dog Lost entry with any sightings or news.**

- **Get the message out to as many people as possible on Facebook. There are groups that have been set up specifically to help with dogs that are missing, which include:**
  - Local missing pet groups, remembering to check previous posts as well as writing your own as the dog may have already been found by somebody and details posted.
  - Find Jeff
  - Harvey's Army
  - **Drone SAR for lost dogs UK.** This group consists of drone pilots who may be able to assist with an aerial search (if the dog is in an area where they are allowed to fly). Some drones are also equipped with thermal cameras.
  - **Drone SAR ground search teams for lost dogs UK.** They will help with trying to organise ground searches.
  - **Pets Lost and Found Nationwide UK (Dogs)**
  - **National Dog Finders Alliance**
- **Post on Labrador/dog groups that you know and ask others to do the same and share the post,** as o

Once the dog is on a few pages, people will soon share it with other groups. However, make a list of where you post as once the dog has been hopefully found, you should edit all posts to say REUNITED so that people don't still go out searching.

- **Message any Facebook groups that are specifically for local dog walkers – this group of people are out walking most days and cover a huge area.**
- **If there is a local community group, give them a description of the dog and details of where it was lost.**

- **Post details of the missing dog on local selling sites.** These have a wide audience in the local area and it is likely that people may come out and help search. People will also question any posts about similar dogs for sale to check whether it is the missing dog.
- **Check to see if there is a local 'spotted' Facebook group** (i.e. a local group set up to let people what is going on in the area) and if there is, post details about the dog.
- **Contact the following to check if the dog has been handed to them, leaving your contact details in case the dog is subsequently handed in:**
  - Microchip company
  - Local police
  - Local vets (when you register on **Dogs Lost**, you receive an email with advice on what to do to try and find your dog. Within the email there is a 'click here' button that gives you details of local vets)
  - Rescue centres
  - Park rangers (if applicable)
- **Remember that not everyone is on Facebook.** Contact places where people congregate in the local community, e.g. village halls, local churches, pubs, cafes, etc., to give them details about the dog. If the dog is missing more than a few hours, give them posters to put up. Similarly, give details and posters to any local business that people may visit, e.g. the local post office.
- **If the dog has been sighted, contact **The Dog Trapping Team Search and Rescue Network**** to see if they have anyone in your area that can help with setting a trap. (If they don't have anyone, they may still be able to point you in the direction of someone else in your area, e.g. my local lost pet Facebook group has a dog trap).
- **Send details to local radio stations** by phone and by message.
- **Try to find tracker dogs in your area**, e.g. K9 Search Dogs UK, K9Tracker, K9 Tracking, Lost Dog Tracker.
- **If the dog has been lost in areas where there are known rabbit warrens**, contact local drain inspection companies who may be able to help search any underground tunnels.
- **There is an organisation called **Animal Search UK**** who can help with advice, searches, thermal imaging, specialist publicity, etc. However, there is a charge for their service, although this may be covered by insurance. (There is a similar group called **The Pet Detectives** for dogs that are believed to be stolen).
- **Set up a dedicated Facebook page for the dog** so that all information and updates, including sightings, can be detailed in one place.
- **Set up a thunderclap** (an online message that reaches thousands of people). Go to [thunderclap.it/start](https://thunderclap.it/start) for instructions on how to do this.

**Losing a dog is most people's worst fear. However, there are things you can do to be prepared in case one of them does go missing.**

- **Register with Dog Lost.**
- **Create a folder on your phone in which to store photos of your dogs.** This means that you have instant access to pictures that can be used on a poster. The photos should be clear and of one dog only, as you don't want people being confused about which dog is lost. Their microchip numbers are also in this folder.
- **Keep new toys, preferably only played with by the missing dog.** They can be tied up in a plastic bag with the dog's name on it and stored at the back of a cupboard. That way if you ever need to get a tracker dog, you have something that has just one dog's scent on it.
- **Register on your local lost pets Facebook page** and on a few more national Labrador groups.
- **Compile a list of the phone numbers** of local vets, the dog warden, the police and the dog shelter.