

Lost Pet Prevention, Response & Reunification Guide



— **NATIONAL ANIMAL** —
CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION

**ANIMAL
CONTROL**

July is Lost Pet Prevention Month

Designed to empower animal care and control agencies to protect the public, respond effectively, and boost return-to-home success every day of the year, including the busiest seasons.



Introduction: Why Prevention, Rapid Response, and Reunification Efforts Matter

Every year, millions of pets go missing due to preventable circumstances such as escape from home, improper identification, lack of containment, or fear-based flight responses. Shelters and rescues serve as critical points of reunification, but the most effective strategy is preventing separation in the first place.

Prevention First

For your community

Addressing vulnerabilities before an escape occurs is always more effective than reactive recovery efforts.

Rapid Response

For your community

When prevention fails, the first 24 hours are critical. Organized, immediate action dramatically improves outcomes.

Shelter & Animal Control Reunification Response

For The Animal Welfare Professional

When a lost pet enters a shelter or animal control system, every intake step can either support or delay reunification.



Section 1 - *For your community*

Prevention First

Preventing loss before it happens is always the best outcome. This section helps animal welfare professionals promote practical, proactive strategies that reduce escape risk and support stronger return-to-home results.



Identification & Microchipping

The fastest way to reunite a lost pet with their family is to make sure the pet can be identified quickly and accurately. Every pet should have both **visible identification** and **permanent identification**. A collar with an up-to-date ID tag helps community members contact the owner right away, while a microchip provides a permanent backup if the collar or tag is lost.

ID Tags – Primary Visual Identification

ID tags are often the fastest way for a finder to contact an owner. Tags should always be considered essential, even when a microchip is present.

- Durable tag with readable engraving
- Updated every 6–12 months
- QR code tags recommended for advanced tracking
- Should include:
 - Pet's name
 - Primary phone number
 - Secondary phone number
 - Optional note such as "I'm microchipped"

Microchipping – Permanent Identification

A microchip is a small electronic chip implanted under the skin that can be read by a scanner at shelters, veterinary clinics, and animal control agencies. A microchip is **not a GPS device** and does not track the pet's location. Its purpose is to permanently link the pet to the owner's contact information through a registration database.

- Scan every incoming animal regardless of collar presence
- Register chip before pet leaves shelter/rescue
- Verify owner contact information at time of adoption
- Update registry annually or when contact changes
- Confirm chip appears in at least one national registry

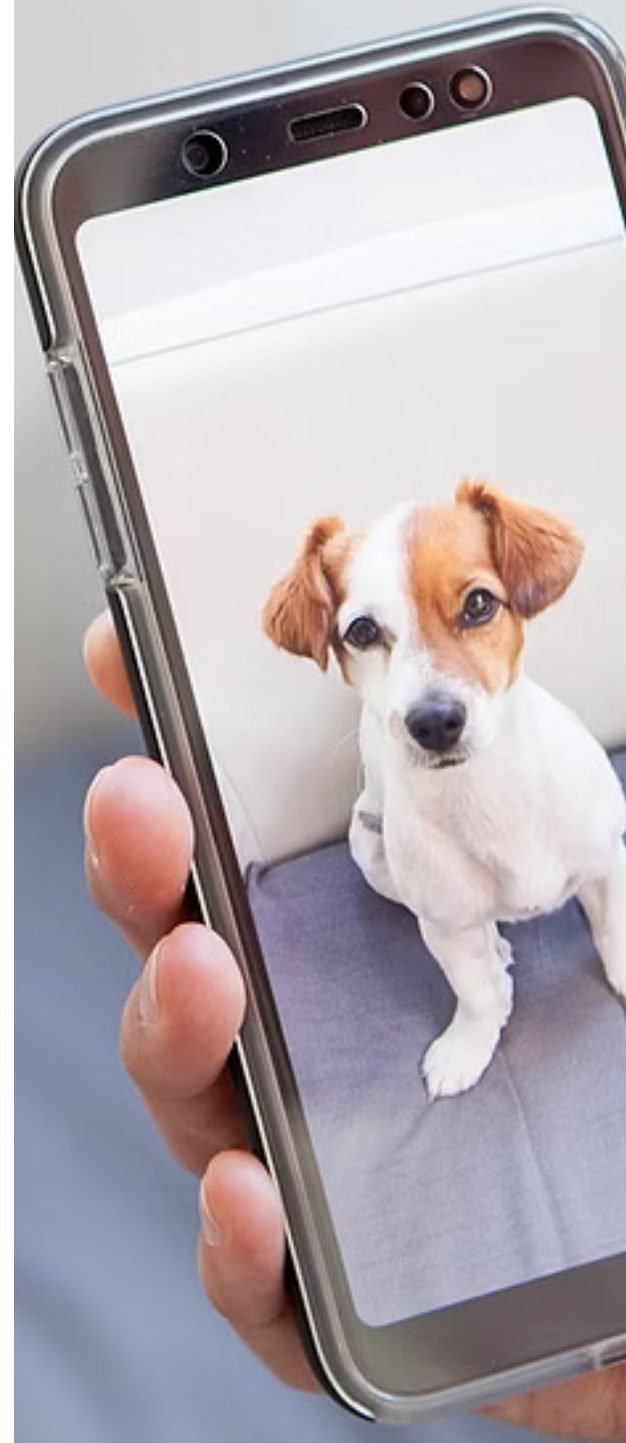
Identification Checklist

- My pet wears a current ID tag
- My phone number on the tag is correct
- My pet has a registered microchip
- I know my pet's microchip number
- I keep a current photo of my pet on my phone
- I added a backup emergency contact
- I know my pet's microchip number



Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Assuming a microchip is automatically registered after implantation
- Forgetting to update registration after moving or changing phone numbers
- Using old or unreadable ID tags
- Letting pets go outdoors without visible identification
- Believing a microchip can track a pet's location in real time



STRONGER ID. SAFER PETS.

BEST PRACTICES FOR IDENTIFICATION & MICROCHIPPING



01



USE BOTH: VISIBLE ID AND MICROCHIP

Encourage pet owners to use both visible ID and microchips, not one or the other.

02



OFFER MICROCHIP IMPLANTATION WITH SAME-DAY REGISTRATION SUPPORT

Make it easy for pet owners to protect their pets by providing microchip implantation with same-day registration support whenever possible.

03



BUILD "CHECK YOUR CHIP" REMINDERS INTO ROUTINE EVENTS

Incorporate microchip check reminders into vaccine clinics, licensing drives, and adoption follow-up communications.

04



SCAN EVERY FOUND PET AT INTAKE AND SCAN THE FULL BODY

Always scan every found pet at intake and scan the full body, as microchips can migrate.

05



PROVIDE OWNERS WITH WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS

Give pet owners clear, written instructions on how to register and update their microchip information.

06



INCLUDE BACKUP CONTACT FIELDS

Collect and document backup contact information on intake and adoption paperwork in case primary contacts cannot be reached.

07



HOST SEASONAL "ID CHECK" OR "CHIP CHECK" EVENTS

Host seasonal "ID Check" or "Chip Check" events before fireworks, holidays, and summer travel periods to help keep pets safe year-round.



A FEW MINUTES TODAY CAN SAVE A LIFETIME OF HEARTACHE.
IDENTIFY. REGISTER. UPDATE. REUNITE.



Home & Outdoor Safety Prevention

Many pets become lost through everyday situations that can be prevented, such as open doors, broken gates, loose leashes, or unfamiliar outdoor environments. A few simple safety practices at home and during outdoor activities can greatly reduce the risk of a pet getting loose.

Containment Systems

Most pet escapes occur due to preventable home or yard vulnerabilities. Regular inspection of containment areas is essential.

- Fence fully secured with no gaps or weak points
- Gates self-latching and secure
- Dig-proof barriers installed where needed
- Regular perimeter inspections conducted

Leash & Harness Safety

Proper restraint equipment significantly reduces escape risk during walks or transport.

- Properly fitted harness using the two-finger fit rule
- Front-clip harness for reactive dogs when appropriate
- Secure leash attachment verified before exiting doors



Home and Outdoor Safety Checklist

- I checked my fence and gates for escape risks
- My pet's collar, harness, or leash fits properly
- My pet is supervised outdoors

- My pet is secured before car doors are opened
- I have a plan for visitors, deliveries, and parties

- My pet is safely managed during fireworks and storms
- My pet has current ID before travel or outings

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Assuming a fenced yard is escape-proof without routine checks
- Leaving pets unattended outside for long periods
- Using worn, loose, or poorly fitted equipment
- Opening car doors before securing the pet
- Allowing pets near entry doors during parties or deliveries
- Forgetting that fireworks, storms, and loud noises can trigger panic escapes

PROFESSIONAL TIPS: HOME & OUTDOOR SAFETY

SMART PREVENTION. SAFE PETS. STRONGER COMMUNITIES.

01



NORMALIZE ROUTINE CONVERSATIONS

Make door dashing, gate safety, travel safety, and visitor management a standard part of every interaction with pet families.

02



ASK TARGETED QUESTIONS DURING INTAKE, ADOPTION, OR OUTREACH VISITS:

- “Has this pet ever slipped a leash?”
- “Can this pet climb, dig, or jump fencing?”
- “How does your household handle guests or open-door traffic?”

03



TAILOR PREVENTION ADVICE TO THE SPECIFIC PET

Pay special attention to:

- fearful dogs
- recent adoptees
- pets with a history of escape
- flight-risk cats
- pets new to the area

04



ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO CREATE A “SAFE ROOM” PLAN

Designate a quiet, secure space for pets during parties, holidays, and fireworks to reduce stress and risk of escape.

05



INCLUDE HOME SAFETY MESSAGING IN SEASONAL OUTREACH

Focus on key risk periods—especially before July 4th and during summer travel seasons.

06



USE VISUAL EDUCATION TOOLS

Show common household escape points such as gates, screen doors, windows, and car doors.

07



PARTNER WITH HOUSING PROVIDERS, NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS, AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Work together to reinforce safe containment practices and supportive pet policies.

08



PROMOTE SAFE ROUTINES

- Secure gates and doors
- Visitor management
- Leash and harness checks
- Travel safety planning
- Supervised outdoor time
- Proper ID + microchip

09



EVERY CONVERSATION IS PREVENTION

Empower pet families with knowledge, tools, and confidence to keep pets safe at home and in the community.



SAFE HOMES. SECURE OUTDOORS. KEPT TOGETHER.
PREVENT ESCAPES. PROTECT PETS. SAVE LIVES.

Training & Behavioral Prevention

Prevention is not only about fencing and equipment. A pet's behavior, fear level, and daily routine also affect the risk of becoming lost. Training, enrichment, and stress reduction can help reduce escape attempts and make pets easier to recover if they do get loose.

Recall and Response Skills

Dogs benefit from reward-based recall training that teaches them to come when called. Recall practice should begin in low-distraction environments and gradually build over time. Owners should use praise and rewards consistently and never punish a dog for returning.

While recall can improve safety, it should not replace secure leashes, gates, or supervision.

- Short training sessions (2–5 minutes)
- High-value rewards only
- Practice in progressively distracting environments

Safe Confinement and Crate Training

Crates, carriers, and safe rooms can help prevent escapes during stressful situations such as:

- fireworks,
- thunderstorms,
- moving,
- guests entering and leaving,
- veterinary recovery,
- and emergency situations.

Crates and confinement areas should be introduced positively and used as safe, comfortable spaces rather than punishment.

Behavior Prevention Is Part of Lost Pet Prevention

A prevention plan should consider not just where a pet lives, but how the pet responds to stress, change, and the outdoors. Pets who are newly adopted, fearful, shy, or under-socialized may need extra support and added precautions.

Training & Behavioral Prevention

1

Enrichment Reduces Escape Behavior

Pets who are bored, under-stimulated, or stressed may be more likely to roam, bolt, or seek stimulation elsewhere. Daily enrichment can improve well-being and reduce problem behaviors. Helpful enrichment tools may include:

- puzzle feeders,
- sniff walks,
- scent games,
- food-dispensing toys,
- climbing or hiding spaces for cats,
- and regular interactive play.

2

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Relying on recall instead of secure containment
- Punishing a pet for returning after getting loose
- Using crates only during stressful events without positive practice
- Ignoring signs of fear, anxiety, or overstimulation
- Underestimating the needs of newly adopted or shy pets
- Assuming exercise alone is enough without mental enrichment

Pets at Higher Risk of Becoming Lost

Some pets may need extra prevention planning, including:

- newly adopted pets,
- shy or fearful pets,
- pets with a history of escape,
- intact animals,
- pets frightened by noise,
- pets that are new to the neighborhood,
- pets in busy multi-person households,
- and pets traveling or staying in unfamiliar places.

For these pets, professionals should recommend stronger identification, more supervision, secure equipment, and a clear prevention plan.

PROFESSIONAL TIPS: TRAINING & BEHAVIORAL PREVENTION

STRONGER BEHAVIOR. SAFER PETS. BETTER OUTCOMES.

01



FRAME BEHAVIOR SUPPORT AS A LOST-PET-PREVENTION STRATEGY

Behavior support is a critical part of keeping pets safe, secure, and successfully at home.

02



PROVIDE SIMPLE, REALISTIC PREVENTION ADVICE FOR FAMILIES

Offer practical, easy-to-follow steps that fit into real life—especially for families with newly adopted pets.

03



EMPHASIZE THAT FEARFUL PETS OFTEN REQUIRE MANAGEMENT FIRST, TRAINING SECOND

Safety and confidence come before advanced training. Management prevents rehearsal of fear and escape.

04



ENCOURAGE DECOMPRESSION PLANS FOR NEWLY ADOPTED ANIMALS

Include:

- Slow introductions
- Supervised outdoor exposure
- Secure transition periods
- Double-checking ID before outings

05



OFFER CLEAR GUIDANCE AROUND HIGH-RISK TRIGGERS

Prepare families for common risks such as fireworks, moving, travel, holidays, and guests.

06



USE NONJUDGMENTAL LANGUAGE WHEN DISCUSSING ESCAPE BEHAVIOR

Approach conversations with empathy and partnership. Shame closes doors—support opens them.

07



PROVIDE REFERRALS FOR BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

Connect families with qualified professionals when pets show severe fear, anxiety, or panic behaviors.

08



REMIND ADOPTERS AND CLIENTS THAT ENRICHMENT SUPPORTS BOTH WELFARE AND SAFETY

Mental stimulation, predictability, and positive outlets reduce stress, boredom, and escape-motivated behaviors.

09



TEACH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TO IDENTIFY HIGH-RISK PETS

Look for signs of bolting, backing out of gear, hiding, or fleeing when approached.

10



FOCUS ON PREVENTION, SUPPORT, AND PREPAREDNESS

Proactive planning, consistent management, and compassionate guidance keep pets safe and families successful.



SUPPORT BEHAVIOR. PREVENT ESCAPES. KEEP PETS HOME.
EDUCATE. PREPARE. PREVENT.

LOST DOG



Friendly, white with one brown spot.
Address: 1234 Main St, Harvey, LA. Call 744-555-0129.
REWARD if found and returned.

Section 2 - *For your community*

Rapid Response

When a pet goes missing, the first 24 hours are critical. This section equips animal welfare professionals with rapid-response guidance that supports faster, more organized recovery efforts.

Lost Pet Response Plan

When a pet goes missing, immediate and organized action significantly increases the chance of recovery. Time is critical — instruct your community to follow this structured response plan.

⚠️ The first 24 hours are the most critical window for recovery. Do not wait — encourage pet owners to act immediately.




NATIONAL ANIMAL
CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION

The most effective methods to get lost dogs home.

According to the Return-to-Home Joint National Survey by National Animal Care & Control Association & PetHub Inc. (2022-23)

Finding Your Lost Dog

What to Do WHEN

1st 24 Hours & Beyond

First 24 hrs	Days 2-3	First Week	First Month	After 1 Month
PHYSICAL SEARCH	PHYSICAL SEARCH	LOCAL SHELTER	NEIGHBORHOOD APPS	REGIONAL SHELTER
SOCIAL MEDIA	NEIGHBORHOOD APPS	SOCIAL MEDIA	REGIONAL SHELTER	LOCAL SHELTER
ID TAGS	LOCAL SHELTER	NEIGHBORHOOD APPS	LOST PET FORUMS	LOCAL POLICE
NEIGHBORHOOD APPS	SOCIAL MEDIA	LOST PET DATABASES	PHYSICAL SEARCH	TRAP
LOCAL SHELTER	REGIONAL SHELTER	REGIONAL SHELTER	MICROCHIP	NEIGHBORHOOD APPS
Waste no time.	Be methodical.	Repeat the steps.	Don't stop looking.	Never give up.

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Lost Dog

REWARD

Lost Pet Poster Template

Use this template when your pet has gone missing. Fill in all fields clearly and distribute widely within your neighborhood and surrounding areas.

Contact Josh @
(474) 555-0147

Poster Must-Haves

- Large bold "LOST PET" header
- Clear, recent color photo of pet
- Pet's name, breed, age, and weight
- Distinctive markings or features
- Last known location and date
- Owner phone number (large font)
- Reward amount if applicable

Distribution Checklist

- Post within 1–3 mile radius of last known location
- Submit to local shelters and vet offices
- Share on Nextdoor, Facebook, and lost pet groups
- Post on PawBoost, Petfinder, and similar platforms
- Laminate outdoor posters for weather resistance
- Use bright neon paper for high visibility
- Update poster if new sightings are reported

Josh
(474) 555-0147

Josh
(474) 555-0147

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(474) 555-0147

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(474) 555-0147

Josh
(474) 555-0147

Josh
(474) 555-0147

Josh
(474) 555-0147

Lost Pet Poster Sample

[Add your agency logo here]

MISSING PET

INSERT PHOTO HERE (Clear, front-facing, recent)

Pet Name: _____

Species / Breed: _____

Sex / Age / Weight: _____

Color & Distinctive Marks: _____

Last Seen — Location: _____

Last Seen — Date & Time: _____

Microchip #: _____

Collar Description: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Phone (Primary): _____

Phone (Secondary): _____

Email: _____

REWARD

Yes No

Amount (optional): _____

IF FOUND — PLEASE DO NOT CHASE CALL IMMEDIATELY

■ Tip: Post at eye level within a 2-block radius. Share on Nextdoor, Facebook, and Petco Love Lost (petcolove.org/lost) for fastest results.

FOUND DOG

Found Pet Poster Template

If you have found a stray animal, a well-crafted found pet poster helps reunite the pet with its owner quickly and safely.

Poster Must-Haves

- Large bold "FOUND PET" header in bright color
- Clear photo of the found animal
- General location where pet was found
- Date found
- Brief description (species, color, approximate size)
- Contact phone number or email
- Note if pet is safe and being cared for

Important Safety Notes

- Do not include all identifying details publicly — ask callers to describe the pet to verify ownership
- Take the animal to a vet or shelter to scan for a microchip
- Report the found pet to local animal control
- Keep the pet safely contained while searching for the owner

Found Pet Poster Sample

[Add your agency logo here]

■ FOUND PET

Do you know this animal?

INSERT PHOTO HERE (Optional but recommended — clear, front-facing)

Species / Breed: _____

Color & Description: _____

Approximate Age / Size: _____

Distinguishing Features: _____

Collar / Tag / Microchip: _____

Where Found: _____

Date & Time Found: _____

TO CLAIM THIS PET, CONTACT:

Name / Agency: _____

Phone (Primary): _____

Phone (Secondary): _____

Email: _____

PET STATUS

■ In our care ■ Transferred to shelter ■ Microchip scanned ■ Vet checked

Shelter / Location: _____

Intake #: _____

■ Tip: Report found pets to your local shelter and microchip registries. Post on Nextdoor, Facebook, and Petco Love Lost (petcolove.org/lost) to reach the owner faster.

Social Media Post Templates

Social media is one of the most powerful tools for lost and found pet recovery. Use these templates to maximize reach and engagement across platforms.

Lost Pet Post

**LOST [PET TYPE] –
[NEIGHBORHOOD/CITY]**

Name: [Pet Name] |

Breed:

[Breed] | Color: [Color]

Missing since: [Date] near
[Location]

[Distinctive feature, e.g.,
"has a blue collar and a
notched ear"]

If seen, please call
[Phone Number]
immediately. Do NOT
chase — call us first!

#LostDog #LostCat #
[YourCity]Lost

Found Pet Post

**FOUND [PET TYPE] –
[NEIGHBORHOOD/CITY]**

Found on: [Date] near
[General Location]

Description: [Color, size,
approximate breed]

Pet is safe and being
cared for.

If this is your pet, please
call [Phone Number] and
be prepared to describe
identifying features.

#FoundDog #FoundCat #
[YourCity]Found


Share Request Post

**PLEASE SHARE – Help
bring [Pet Name] home!**

[Pet Name] has been
missing since [Date] in
[Location].

Every share reaches more
eyes. Even if you're not
local, your network might
be!

Contact: [Phone Number]
#MissingPet
#HelpFindPet
#ShareToHelp

 **Post consistently across platforms: Facebook community groups, Nextdoor, Instagram, and dedicated lost pet networks. Tag your city and neighborhood in every post for maximum local visibility.**



Section 3 - *For the Animal Welfare Professionals*

Shelter & Animal Control Reunification Response

Shelters and animal control agencies play a central role in return-to-home efforts by creating efficient intake procedures, conducting thorough identification checks, documenting pets accurately, and making found-animal information visible to the public as quickly as possible.

Shelter & Animal Control Reunification Response

Return-to-home is one of the most important outcomes in sheltering and animal control. Prompt reunification supports animal welfare by reducing stress, minimizing unnecessary shelter exposure, and helping pets return quickly to familiar homes. It also supports sound shelter operations by reducing housing demand, preserving staff time and resources, and improving capacity for animals who truly need shelter intervention.

For shelters and animal control agencies, every found pet should be approached as a potential reunification opportunity from the moment of intake forward.

Owner Contact and Reclaim Support

Once ownership information is identified, agencies should make prompt and repeated attempts to contact the owner. A single call or voicemail should not be considered the end of outreach.

Best practice outreach may include:

- phone calls
- voicemail
- text messaging when appropriate
- email
- emergency or secondary contacts listed in records
- follow-up communication across shifts

Reclaim should be supported with clear, accessible instructions so owners understand:

- what documents may be needed
- the reclaim timeline
- fees or waiver options if applicable
- hours and location
- any vaccination, licensing, or legal requirements

Agencies should reduce unnecessary barriers wherever possible while still following local law and agency policy.

Top 10 Shelter & Animal Control Actions to Improve Reunification



Treat reunification as a priority from the moment of intake

Return-to-home should begin as soon as a found pet enters the system. Reunification is not just a final outcome—it is an active process that starts with intake, documentation, and owner search efforts. Agencies that build reunification into daily workflow often improve outcomes and reduce unnecessary shelter stay.



Use low-stress handling during intake

Found animals may be frightened, disoriented, injured, or overstimulated. Low-stress handling helps staff safely assess, scan, photograph, and house animals while reducing fear and minimizing additional distress. Humane handling supports both animal welfare and more effective intake processing.



Scan every found pet thoroughly for a microchip

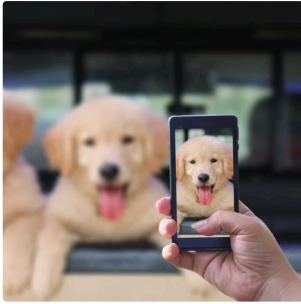
Every found pet should be scanned as early in the intake process as safety allows. Staff should scan the entire body slowly and more than once, since chips can migrate. If a microchip is found, the number should be documented accurately and owner contact efforts should begin right away.



Check for all forms of identification

In addition to scanning for a microchip, staff should check for collars, tags, rabies tags, licenses, tattoos, and other identifying features. Visible identification may provide the fastest path to owner contact and should be documented immediately.

Top 10 Shelter & Animal Control Actions to Improve Reunification



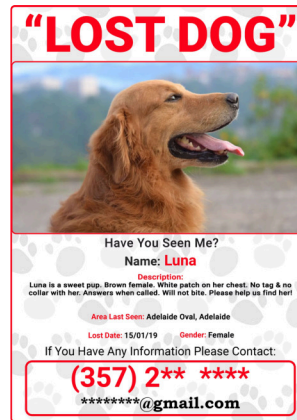
Take clear photos and detailed intake notes

Strong documentation is one of the most effective reunification tools shelters can provide. Intake records should include clear photos, found location, date, physical description, distinguishing features, and any accessories present at intake. Detailed, searchable records make it easier for owners and staff to identify possible matches.



Match found pets against lost-pet reports

Shelters should actively compare found-animal records with recent lost-pet reports rather than relying only on owners to search on their own. Matching should consider location, date, size, color, sex, behavior, and unique markings. Proactive matching increases the chance of faster reunification.



Post found pets quickly and make them easy to find

Public visibility is critical. Found pets should be posted to approved public-facing platforms as quickly as possible with a clear photo, intake date, found location, and basic identifying information. Delays in posting may delay recovery and increase length of stay.

Make prompt and repeated attempts to contact owners

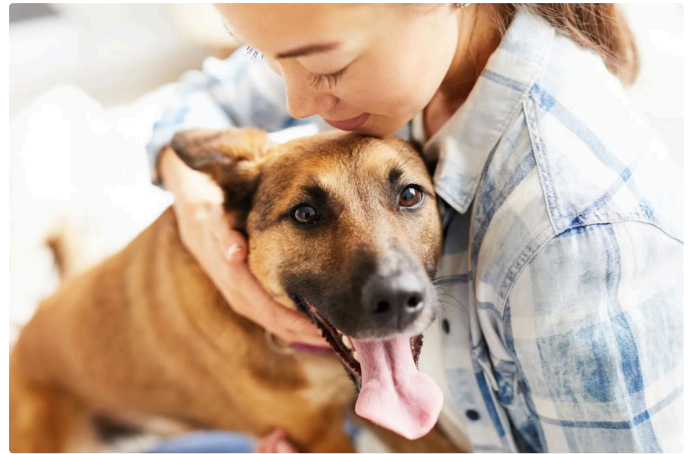
When any ownership information is available, agencies should use all available contact methods, including phone, voicemail, text, email, and emergency contacts if listed. A single unanswered call should not end outreach efforts. Consistent follow-up across shifts helps improve reclaim opportunities.

Top 10 Shelter & Animal Control Actions to Improve Reunification



Reduce barriers to reclaim whenever possible

Clear, easy-to-understand reclaim instructions help families recover pets more quickly. Shelters should explain what owners need, where to go, and what timelines apply. When consistent with law and policy, agencies should work to reduce avoidable barriers that may delay reunification.



Continue reunification efforts throughout the stray hold

Return-to-home should continue beyond the first intake steps. Shelters should review lost-pet reports daily, document all outreach attempts, and keep found-animal records current and visible throughout the stray hold period. Reunification should remain active until the pet is reclaimed or the case moves to the next legal outcome.

Strong reunification systems support both animal welfare and shelter operations. By combining low-stress intake, accurate identification practices, proactive owner search efforts, and accessible reclaim procedures, shelters and animal control agencies can improve return-to-home outcomes and reduce unnecessary time in care.

Intake Recovery Checklist

SHELTER INTAKE & RECOVERY CHECKLIST

Use this checklist for every animal intake to ensure consistent identification, accurate documentation, and the best possible chance of reunification with their family.

■ A — Intake Information

Intake Date:	_____	Intake Time:	_____
Officer / Staff Name:	_____	Badge / ID #:	_____
Agency / Shelter Name:	_____	Intake # (assigned):	_____
Location Where Found:	_____		
Reported By (name/contact):	_____		

■ B — Animal Description

Species:	_____	Breed (if known):	_____
Sex:	_____	Approximate Age:	_____
Color / Markings:	_____	Weight (approx):	_____
Collar Color / Type:	_____	Tag Info (if any):	_____
Distinguishing Features / Notes:	_____		

■ ■ C — Identification Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Scan for microchip	<i>Use universal scanner; record chip #</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Microchip # recorded: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Microchip registered to owner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not registered <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
<input type="checkbox"/> Registry contacted / searched	<i>Search all major registries</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> License tag present and recorded	<i>Note tag # and issuing municipality</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies tag present and recorded	<i>Note tag # and issuing vet/clinic</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> ID tag present — owner info noted	<i>Record all contact details from tag</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo taken of animal on intake	<i>Front-facing, clear lighting</i>

Intake Recovery Checklist

- Animal entered into shelter database *Assign intake # and kennel location*
- Lost pet reports checked for match *Check local reports, social media, Petco Love Lost*

D — Condition Assessment

- Animal appears healthy / no visible injuries
- Injuries noted — describe below _____
- Signs of neglect or abuse noted *Document and notify supervisor*
- Animal is pregnant or nursing
- Animal appears malnourished / dehydrated
- Veterinary examination required
- Emergency veterinary care required *Contact emergency vet immediately*

Injury / Condition Notes: _____

E — Owner Outreach & Reunification Steps

- Owner contacted via microchip registry *Record date/time of contact attempt*
- Owner contacted via license tag *Record date/time of contact attempt*
- Owner contacted via ID tag _____
- Lost pet report filed / cross-referenced *Check local shelter system*
- Petco Love Lost photo uploaded *petcolove.org/lost — AI photo match*
- Posted to agency social media / Nextdoor
- Neighboring shelters notified
- Hold period start date recorded Stray hold Owner surrender
- Hold period end date: _____

F — Outcome

- Returned to owner
- Transferred to rescue
- Adopted
- Euthanized (humane / medical)
- Still in care
- Other: _____

Outcome Date: _____

Intake Recovery Checklist

Outcome Notes: _____

Staff Signature: _____



Highlighted rows = priority action items requiring extra attention or documentation. | = checkbox

Resources

Representing a cross-section of tools used across shelters, this list is informational only and not an endorsement. We welcome input from readers to help maintain a diverse, relevant resource guide.



[DocuPet](#)

DocuPet is a cloud-based pet registration and microchip registry platform used by many shelters and municipalities. It streamlines owner data management, intake, and reunification efforts by linking microchip information with current contact details. It supports efficient owner outreach and case management while helping ensure accurate, up-to-date records.



[Petco Love Lost](#)

Petco Love Lost is a national lost-pet recovery network that enhances reunifications by connecting lost-pet reports with existing shelter data and owner records. Shelters can attach photos, claim lost pets, and broadcast sightings to a broad community audience to accelerate matching and return.

Resources

Representing a cross-section of tools used across shelters, this list is informational only and not an endorsement. We welcome input from readers to help maintain a diverse, relevant resource guide.



PetHub

PetHub operates a comprehensive online registry and database for microchip and pet registrations. It supports fast, accurate matching of found pets to owners and integrates with shelter workflows to speed reunifications and keep owner data current.



PawBoost

PawBoost is a crowd-sourced lost-pet platform that enables rapid dissemination of lost and found notices through alerts and social sharing. Shelters can post found-pet notices and owners can report sightings, amplifying community engagement to reunite pets quickly.

Resources

Representing a cross-section of tools used across shelters, this list is informational only and not an endorsement. We welcome input from readers to help maintain a diverse, relevant resource guide.



[AKC Reunite](#)

AKC Reunite is a long-standing national pet recovery program administered by the American Kennel Club. It offers microchip enrollment, owner data matching, and strong support networks that many shelters rely on for efficient reunifications of lost dogs and other pets.



[24PetWatch](#)

24PetWatch provides microchip registry services and a 24/7 recovery network, helping shelters quickly reconnect lost pets with their families.



[PetLink](#)

PetLink is a nationwide microchip registry that enables shelters and clinics to quickly match found or recovered pets with their registered owners. It helps streamline reunifications and keeps owner data current.

Resources



[HomeAgain](#)

HomeAgain is a widely used microchip registry and recovery network that supports rapid owner reunifications through up-to-date contact records and proactive retrieval alerts.



The Standard of
Veterinary Excellence

[American Animal Hospital Association](#)

AAHA's Find Your Pet's Microchip Registry is a centralized lookup tool that helps veterinary professionals and shelters identify the correct microchip registry for any scanned pet and access current owner contact information.



[PetKey](#)

PetKey provides a nationwide pet identity registry that stores microchip and owner data to support quick pet reunifications. It's a practical tool for shelters to cross-reference scans with up-to-date owner contact information during intake and outreach.