

(Adapted from www.catchat.org/lost.html)

LOST A CAT? - Here's what to do...

First, don't panic too soon – cats often go 'missing' and then arrive home late, or even the next morning, wondering what all the fuss is about. So, give them a few hours at least before you take action, then print off this page and tick off each item as you cover it.

Action Point 1 - First, check all these places:

- every room in your house / loft / cellar / all cupboards
- behind curtains / under duvets / behind settees / under beds
- washing machine / dishwasher / tumble drier / oven / microwave
- chimneys / dustbin / water butt / compost bin / sheds / garages
- green houses / outside toilets/ vehicles / gardens / hedgerows
- ask neighbours to check their sheds, garages, etc.

Action Point 2 - Make a list of the following details...

- the cat's name, age, breed (even if 'moggie'), gender, size, fur length, colouring
- any distinguishing features - white paws, striped tail, missing leg etc.
- neutered/spayed or entire?
- temperament – approachable? shy? friendly?
- were they wearing a collar, if so, what colour?
- is he/she microchipped?
- when and where your cat was last seen
- a photograph if possible (people remember photos better than descriptions)

And give those details to:

- If your cat is microchipped, call Petlog: 0870 6066 751 (or other data base if your cat is not on Petlog) so they can flag your cat as missing. They are open 24 hours a day, and also give advice. Every vet and rescue know their number and they are nearly always the first port of call when they find a lost animal.
- local vets (all practices in your area, not just your own vet); for details of vets in your area go to: www.any-uk-vet.co.uk
- police station
- local schools
- postman, milkman, window cleaner
- local newspaper (lost & found sections)
- local television
- local catteries
- local radio (they often broadcast lost & found appeals)
- your local animal rescue organisations and the regional and national lost and found registers ~ a list with links and contact details is on the 'Lost' page of our website.

Action Point 3 - Pounding the streets

- PLEASE NOTE, if you are under 18 years of age, do NOT go looking for your cat alone after dark; preferably take a friend with you and go in daylight hours
- walk around your local area, paying particular attention to any garages, lock-ups or empty houses
- call for your pet by name (you may feel daft at first, but this often works)

- shake a box of his favourite biscuits, or squeeze a favourite squeaky toy
- stop regularly and listen ~ give your cat a chance to answer your call
- stay in one area long enough for your pet to reach you if he is in the vicinity

Action Point 4 - Advertise

Make up a leaflet, including a contact telephone number and with a photo if possible. **Don't put a full description of your cat**; that way if someone contacts you saying they have found your cat, you can check those extra details with them to know if they are genuine. Get plenty of copies made, and distribute as follows:

- IMPORTANT NOTE: if you are under 18 years of age, do NOT distribute leaflets alone after dark; preferably take a friend with you and go in daylight hours
- post them through every door in your immediate area
- display at: post offices, supermarkets, pet shops, vets, library, launderette, hairdressers, pubs, newsagents, fish & chip shops, corner shops, garages, doctors, dentists, police station
- don't forget to check local shop windows for a 'Cat Found' notice, just in case!
- on notice boards in halls such as scouts, brownies, playgroups, youth clubs, social clubs
- tape leaflets to telegraph poles, lamp posts, phone boxes, bus shelters...
- also display one on your own front gate or window

Other Suggestions:

- show the photo to dog walkers, lollipop persons, traffic wardens, road sweepers
- contact your local council's Environmental Health Department. This can be a difficult call to make, but they will be able to tell you if a cat matching your description has been found killed on the road. Unfortunately many councils have no facility for checking for microchips, so they may not contact you in this circumstance.

The 'I've found your cat' phone call:

This is SO IMPORTANT – if you are under 18 years of age, and someone calls saying they have found your cat, do NOT go to see the cat on your own under ANY circumstances.

And finally... don't give up hope

Don't give up hope; cats can disappear for several days and sometimes weeks particularly in good weather, and turn up unharmed. We know of several cases where cats have been lost for weeks, and even months (in one case ten years!), but were eventually reunited with their humans. Cats are extremely resourceful, and will find food, water and shelter in the most unlikely places.

And when your cat comes home:

After you've made a big fuss of him/her and given them their favourite dinner, please remember to inform any authorities who have been asked to look for them, and retrieve the posters you distributed round town!

And if you have not done so already, please, please have your cat microchipped!