

A few tips on what you can do if your cat goes missing



1. **Create posters with picture and details plus contact number(s)** hand out to neighbours and anyone you see. Put them in plastic wallets and seal the wallet. Put up in local shops, pubs, bus stops, vets surgeries, pet shops, libraries and supermarkets – in fact any public/communal areas in the neighbourhood. Stick to all local lamp posts. Also put one in your car and friends' cars – it's amazing how many people see them this way. The best place in the car is the side back window on the passenger side, as this is usually nearest the kerb when the car is parked.

2. **Make smaller flyers and push through every letterbox on your streets** and the surrounding area. They don't have to be big – you could have six or eight to a page and just cut them into smaller notices. Remember you can never have too many posters out there! Start at your house and move out in an ever increasing circle – cats don't always travel along streets and what may seem a long way from your house may only be a short stroll for a cat across walls and gardens.

3. **Knock on doors and ask neighbours to check their sheds and garages** WHILE YOU WAIT ... it's surprising how many people say they will check but as soon as the door is closed they forget. Or better still go and check the shed etc yourself. Your cat may respond to you but not a stranger. Remember though, a cat's instinct is to remain quiet to avoid capture. Your cat may not respond at first, even to a familiar voice. Call, wait and call again. Ask your neighbour(s) if you can repeat this at different times of the day for the next few days, or if possible ask if they can leave the door/window open for a few hours preferably at twilight, dawn or even all night.

4. **Register the cat lost at all vets, catteries, rescue homes** within a 20 mile radius (remember to keep a record of everyone you contact). And, if he is micro-chipped, inform the microchip company that he is missing (that way, if anyone tries to change the address, they should contact you first). Make sure that the microchip company have your current address, email address and phone numbers. Keep checking with them – some organisations are less reliable at getting back to you than others. If someone has found your cat injured, they may have taken him or her to their own vet and this isn't always the vet closest to where you live.

5. **Contact any other "animal" organisations/establishments** you can find – these might include dog groomers, pet sitters, animal feed shops etc etc. Although they probably won't operate a "lost and found" register, they will chat to pet owners, and word may get around. Remember to ask them to display a poster.

Your cat will remember the scent of his home

6. **Leave food out** (but remember, other cats and wildlife could be eating it).

7. **Leave out an unwashed item of your clothing** – socks are a good idea – or better still hang an unwashed bed-sheet on your line – the scent will help orientate the cat especially if he or she is missing in an area he isn't familiar with.

8. **Put the contents of your vacuum cleaner bag on your garden** – it's full of smells that the cat will recognise and if doesn't bring the cat directly to your door will at least hopefully keep him/her in the area. Alternatively if you have a litter tray that the cat has used put some of the used litter on the garden as this will have familiar smells in it.

9. **If your cat wears a collar with a magnet** to enable her to open the cat flap, prop the cat flap open in case she has lost her collar and can't get back in. We would recommend a microchip cat flap rather than a magnet one.

10. **Contact the local fire brigade** and see if they have had to rescue any stuck cats.

11. **Ask the local children to look** – they are great for knowing all the local hidey-holes and love helping. Ask the children to TELL you if they find a cat, not to bring it to you (it might not be yours!). Also have a word with your local post-person and any other delivery people in your area. Find out if anyone in your neighbourhood has had any deliveries and if so, obtain the name and contact details of the courier used. It may be that the cat has gone into a delivery van. If you find out where the subsequent stops were, you could advertise in that area too.

12. **Ask the local radio station** to announce the cat is missing and give out a contact number.

13. **Put a “lost cat” advert in the local paper.** Repeat the advert after a fortnight.

14. **Contact your local environmental services dept** (bin men/cleansing) they keep a log of all deceased animals picked up on the roadside ... this is not a pleasant call to make and hopefully it will come back as negative, but at least it may help with uncertainty. Make this call every couple of days or so, as they may not phone you back if they find a cat after you've contacted them.

15. **Go out after dark** when it is quieter with a companion and walk round the local area gently calling every so often (give the cat a chance to answer you). Keep talking as you walk round, that way if s/he is in the area s/he will hear you. Note, it is better to call when you are on the way home rather than the way out, so that you don't inadvertently lead the cat further from home.

16. **Check out any known local feral colonies** – vets and rescue groups may be aware of some, or you might hear of some as you make other enquiries. S/he could be living there. Likewise check any derelict buildings or any properties which are empty – could the cat have got inside if someone came to visit, or if someone has gone on holiday?

Posters with a good picture often help

17. **Ask local dog walkers to keep an eye out**, and if you can, hand out flyers to dog owners and walkers. Many people have dogs as well as cats and this will help spread the word.

18. **If your cat has previously suffered an upper respiratory infection**, there is some thought that in times of stress it may flare up and reduce the cat's sense of smell. Going out at night when it's quiet and calling and making “food rattling” sounds, may help bring him or her home (see point 15 above).

19. **Add your lost cat to our websites**, once submitted it will automatically post to our Facebook page, Facebook group, our twitter account, our blog and to our website. It is set to public so that everyone on these pages can share to other Facebook groups and to their own Facebook profiles.

Good luck and stay positive. Hopefully your little one has just got himself shut in a shed somewhere and will be home before you know it.

IMPORTANT NOTE: When you get your cat back remember to remove ALL the posters and inform all vets, rescues, websites, microchip company etc that they are home. And if you haven't already done so, get the cat neutered and microchipped!

This sheet was produced by Animals Lost & Found in Kent and reprinted by Anim-Mates

