

# **What to do if you lose your pet?**

**Losing a pet can be very upsetting and stressful** for you and your pet. Here are some tips on what you can do to get your pet home safely as soon as possible!

## **DON'T WAIT!**

If your pet is wearing I.D. with your phone number, make sure your answering machine or cell phone is on and working in case someone found your pet and is trying to reach you. Modify your message to include a statement about the loss of your pet and an alternate way to contact you, such as a work number.

Search the neighborhood surrounding your home as your pet may not have traveled very far. Ask your neighbors (especially children who often notice stray animals when they're out playing) if they have seen an animal matching your pet's description. **It is always helpful to have a picture of your animal with you as others may not be familiar with your animal's breed or may have described it differently than you.**

Come into the closest Santa Barbara County Animal Shelter as soon as possible. **Animal Services Shelters are the only shelters that can accept stray animals.** Animal Service Officers pick up many lost pets every day and they may have already picked up yours. Microchipping your pet in addition to ID tags is the best way to ensure your pet will be returned to you if it reaches the shelter doors. All animals are scanned for a microchip upon intake. Note: make sure microchip data is updated if you move, change phone numbers, or you receive/purchase the animal from someone else.

### **Santa Barbara Shelter – 5473 Overpass Road**

Hours: M-F: 9am to 4:45pm  
Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Phone: (805) 681-5285

### **Lompoc Shelter – 1501 W. Central Avenue**

Hours: M-F: 9am to 4:45pm  
**Closed** for lunch 12:30 – 1:30pm  
Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Phone: (805) 737-7755

### **Santa Maria Animal Center – 548 W. Foster Road**

Hours: M-F: 9am to 4:45pm  
Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Phone: (805) 934-6119

**When you come to Animal Services facility make sure you should look through the stray holding kennels and cages.** If you did not find your pet, fill out a lost report. Animal Services also maintain a list of found and deceased animals. Check these listings as well.

Check the shelter, in person, every 2-3 days and make this a routine. Some animals do not come into the shelter until days or weeks after being reported as lost. Animals are held for 5 business days before they are assessed for adoptability and made available for adoption. **A telephone call is not enough as Animal Services staff may describe the pet differently than you do.**

Make "Lost Pet" signs and post them around your neighborhood and on bulletin boards in local veterinary clinics, pet stores, grocery stores, etc. Include your pet's name, description and photograph. Make tabs

at the bottom of your sign with your name and number in between dotted lines. Cut the dotted lines so that if someone has seen your pet, he or she can easily tear it off and take it with them.

Advertise in local newspapers. Some even offer free lost pet advertisements. Check the "Found Pet" column in your local newspaper daily.

Have specific questions to ask callers claiming to have your pet. Ask about specific physical traits that will specifically identify that it is your pet. Never put these peculiar features on your sign, as unfortunately there are unscrupulous people who may try to extort reward money.

Don't give up hope!! Some pets go missing for weeks, sometimes even months, before they are found by their owners or guardians. When you do find your pet, please remember to collect the signs you posted and inform the local shelter where you made the lost report.

Rabies tags, ID tags and collars are also helpful. Pets should wear their license and identification at all times. **An identification tag, County license, and/or microchip is frequently your pet's best ticket home.** Once you have retrieved your pet, be sure to keep the tag on the animal at all times.