



# How to find a lost pet: A step-by-step checklist

## First steps

When your pet first goes missing, act quickly to increase your chances of bringing them home. Many missing pets will be scared and won't stray far from home usually, so you may have a higher chance of reunion in the first few hours.

- 1. Search the area** where your pet was last seen and **talk to neighbours**. Many pets won't wander far but instead find a safe place to hide until they feel comfortable enough to come out. Search in strange places they may be hiding, such as:

- Closets
- Under and behind beds and furniture
- Small spaces where they may have gotten stuck
- Sheds, garages, and under buildings



2. **Ask your neighbours** to check their home, including both indoor and outdoor spaces.
3. **Contact local council pounds, animal shelters and vet clinics.** They are often the first place to receive lost pets and have resources to help in your search.
4. **Check and update microchip information** on the NZ Companion Animal Register.
  - Ensure your contact details are correct
  - Change your pet's status to missing
  - Create a lost pet page
  - Regularly check the 'Found Pets' page, where the SPCA posts all located animals. They also encourage anyone who finds a pet to list them here as well.

## Tools and services

Your search efforts in your local neighbourhood may not always get results. In this digital age, many owners searching for their lost pets find success on the various online tools available for missing pets. As well as the NZ Companion Animal Register, try the following:

- Trade Me Lost & Found:** Post information about your lost pet and find tips for searching.
- Facebook pages (such as NZ Lost Pet Register) and local neighbourhood Facebook groups:** Share information within these large communities to spread the word about your lost pet.
- Neighbourly:** Chat with local community members you may not personally know.
- Local vet clinics:** They often have lost & found community boards and can contact other pet owners to help find your pet.

## Bringing your pet home safely

Once you've found your lost pet, bringing them home requires patience and caution. Whether it's been a few hours or days, the experience has likely frightened your pet. Here are some tips to ensure their safe return:



- Approach your pet **slowly and calmly**.
- Use a calm, **reassuring** voice.
- Offer **treats or their favourite toy** to entice them to come closer.
- Have a **secure carrier or leash** ready to transport them home safely.
- **Update all listings** and inform everyone that your pet has been found.

## Preventing future escapes

Keeping your pet secure and happy at home is the key to preventing them from escaping and getting lost.

For dogs, secure your yard with high fences and gates. For cats, consider keeping them indoors or providing them with an enclosed outdoor space.

For all animals:

- Provide plenty of mental enrichment and physical stimulation.
- Desex your pet to reduce roaming behaviours.
- Supervise your pet outdoors and keep them restrained by a leash or harness in unfamiliar environments.
- Ensure your pet is microchipped, as it is the primary tool used to reunite lost pets with their owners.
- Use a collar with identification tags to provide immediately visible information to those who may find your pet.
- For habitual wanderers, GPS tracking collars can be a good investment.

While the thought of your pet going missing is undeniably stressful, being prepared and knowing the right steps can make all the difference in ensuring a safe and speedy reunion. Preventative measures will also offer some peace of mind that you are doing all you can to keep your pet safe at home and that if they are lost, they are more likely to be reunited with their whānau.

For more tips and references, refer to the article on [SPCA Pet Insurance](#)



**SPCA** Pet Insurance®