



Leashed or Lost?

Important Tips on Preventing Your Dog from Getting Loose and What to Do in Case Your Dog Gets Lost

The statistics are alarming: Nearly half of the National Pet Recovery's cases occur because the dog was allowed to run loose. The results are almost always devastating – lost or injured dog.

Nobody thinks it will happen, but it does. Consider these other statistics from the National Pet Recovery (a private pet recovery company):

- Less than 2% of all missing pets recovered wore ID tags.
- More than 83% of missing dogs were retrieved 30 miles from the spot where they disappeared.
- At least 200 posters (sometimes up to 1500) are needed to locate a missing dog.
- Dogs that escaped from a secure area of their homes made up 12% of the cases.

It's statistics like these that are the foundation for our fence requirement and "no off-lead" restriction. We're often questioned or challenged about this aspect of our adoption agreement. We have it in place because we know the numbers and the tragic consequences of letting your dog run loose. (Also read "Leashed is Loved.")

Some people believe that microchip technology solves the problem. What good is a microchip scan on a dead or severely injured dog... other than to notify the owner of the sad news? Microchips clearly have their place and are entirely worthwhile, but they do not replace a fence and a leash.

So what about those cases in which, despite best efforts, the dog gets loose? It happens; we know. Accidents happen to even the most careful dog owner. (Please take five minutes to read "Trust is a Deadly Disease.") Here are tips to prevent your dog from getting loose and the steps to take if you dog is lost:

Precautionary Checklist:

1. Periodically check your fence for loose or rotten pickets (or other areas through which your dog can escape) and repair or replace immediately. Be sure to check the bottom of your fence also. Golden Retrievers will dig or push out "chicken wire" and other types of fencing. Make sure that your family and service providers always close and latch your fence gates.
2. Ensure that your dog is wearing a tag with your current contact information and its DVGRR tag. (You can purchase [engrable ID tags](#) from DVGRR's online store, Pap's Place.) Have a recent photograph of your Golden with you when traveling. Camera phones make this easy.
3. If your Golden is a former puppy mill or other unsocialized dog, keep a leash on it even in places where a non-puppy mill dog could be off leash (e.g. a friend's fenced yard or other secure area that is *unfamiliar*). These dogs pose a higher risk of flight when scared. **A word of caution:** Always check fences at friends'/relatives' yards to be certain they are secure before letting your dog into the yard.
4. Ensure that your Golden is microchipped if it is not a DVGRR graduate, and make certain that the chip is registered. The chip is useless if you fail to register it.
5. If your town requires a license for your Golden, make sure that your dog is wearing the license as such licenses usually have contact information or can be traced.
6. Use care when opening the door for friends and delivery people to avoid your Golden's escape. For dogs that are door bolters, work on training them to stay on a mat or at a specified location when the door is open, use gates to limit access to an open door, and if needed, put the dog in a different room before opening the door. Ensure other family members do the same.

7. Should your dog get loose while on a walk if the leash is accidentally dropped, don't chase the dog. Instead, run in the other direction (away from traffic and hazards) and make a game out of having your dog chase you. This is important for your children to know as well.

8. Ensure that you use a secure collar and leash. We recommend the [Easy-Walk™ harness](#) for security (and reflective quality improves nighttime visibility).

Lost Dog Checklist:

1. Stay calm. Act fast. If your dog is a DVGRR Golden, contact us IMMEDIATELY. Within seconds, we can have as many as 5,000 Facebook followers alerted to your lost dog.

2. Contact your local and regional (remember, 83% of lost dogs had travelled 30 miles) police departments, animal shelters, and veterinarians in case your lost Golden has been found and to alert them of its disappearance. Visit shelters in person whenever possible.

3. Contact your mail carrier in case he or she has seen your Golden.

4. Contact your local neighborhood association and ask them to send an alert about your lost dog to your neighborhood.

5. Use websites such as <http://www.findtoto.com> to send alert phone calls to your neighbors. The Humane Society also provides a lost pet service free of charge at their site: <http://www.thecenterforlostpets.com>.

6. Walk your neighborhood and ask if neighbors have seen your dog. Enlist the help of your family and friends. If your lost dog is a puppy mill survivor, take another dog along on the search, preferably one that the missing dog knows and trusts.

7. Post pictures of your dog and contact information throughout your neighborhood. Here are a few links regarding the best way to create your poster:

- <http://www.lostdogsearch.com/fliersandsigns.htm>
- <http://www.missingpetpartnership.org/recovery-posters.php>
- <http://www.frrproducts.com/lostpet/makeflyers.htm>

8. Contact DVGRR for assistance (DVGRR-adopted dogs).

9. Contact local stores, businesses, schools, etc. to find out if your dog has gone there and to advise them of its disappearance.

10. If your dog is lost for more than 24 hours, search near streams, ponds or other sources where he or she may seek water.

11. Consider using a large, humane dog trap, especially if your lost dog is one that is likely to bolt if approached by humans.

Once found, have your dog examined by your veterinarian and tested for Lyme disease and intestinal parasites. You don't know what your dog may have ingested during its flight.

Other sites offering free services or information to help locate lost pets:

- **Missing Pet Network** – Lost and found listings by state plus search advice.
- **Findfido.com** – File an online missing report and search listings of found dogs.
- **petfinder.com** – Advice on finding your lost pet.
- **Missingpetpartnership.org** – Excellent overall information regarding lost pet search.
- **LostDogSearch** – Also an excellent overall site for search tips.