

ADVICE FOR OWNERS OF MISSING CATS

Losing a cat even for a few hours can be a very distressing experience. Trying to think logically at such a time is very difficult indeed so I have tried to help by collating and sharing information I have come across over the years. I hope that this guide helps you to channel your feelings into a productive search which should significantly increase the chance of getting your missing cat back...hopefully safe and sound.

Preliminary Search

Start your search early — don't assume your cat will wander back of their own accord (eg if they are trapped or badly injured).

Search around the home & local area — in cupboards, under beds, behind furniture, in a washing machine or tumble drier, laundry basket, the cellar, loft space etc. Outside in your shed and garage, greenhouse, compost bin, even your car, including in the wheel arches and engine compartment. Cats like to seek out warm, dark places to hide sometimes, so look in even the most unlikely places. While you are searching, stop regularly and listen — give your cat a chance to answer your call.

Visit your immediate neighbours - ask them to look in their homes and garages, sheds and outbuildings. Has anyone had any delivery vans/tradesmen recently as cats will often get into open vehicles.



Tips when searching

- Search at different times of the day/night
- Take some dry food, and a cat carrier with you, or if your cat hates carriers take a pillow case!
- Paying particular attention to any garages, lock-ups, skips and empty properties
- Make a note of any empty houses for sale, and contact the estate agent in case they have shown someone round and shut the cat in
- Call for your cat by name and take time to listen for a reply
- Shake a box of their favourite biscuits, or squeeze a favourite squeaky toy may help
- 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



Report Your Cat as “Missing”

Alert your cat's microchip company

Register your cat as missing and ask if they will also send flyers to all the vets in the area to keep their eyes peeled. Try making contact with Petlog first if you don't know which company your cat's chip is with.

Don't forget to contact them and let them know when you have found your cat



Contact veterinary surgeries in your area

Check if any cats have been brought in injured/unwell.

Also make sure you ask to register your cat on their missing cat list.

To find local vets [click here](#)

Contact your pet insurer

Many owners don't realise that a good pet insurance policy often includes cover for lost/stolen pets. This may include hundreds of pounds' worth of advertising your cat as missing, laminated posters and even a reward for the safe return of your cat.

Word of Mouth - tell as many people locally as you can!

People that are all likely to be out and about and noticing cats at different times.

- postman/woman
- milkman
- parents and neighbourhood children
- elderly neighbours
- dog walkers

Contact or visit local animal charities and rescue centres:

It is possible your cat has been mistaken for a stray and been handed in. Be sure to register on their missing cat list or lost section of their webpage.

Cats Protection

Ph 08702 099099

Email helpline@cats.org.uk

Each branch tends to have their own "lost and found" page. The most local branches are (press "CTRL" and use your mouse to click on the links)

Reading and Districts

Reading East (Wokingham & Bracknell)

Camberley

Maidenhead

Buckinghamshire

Woking

Basingstoke

The Cat Vet Home Visiting Clinic (The Cat Vet Ltd)

T: 07981 250995 Email: jo@thecatvet.co.uk Web: www.thecatvet.co.uk

Reg in England No. 7421427

RSPCA

Ph 0300 1234 999

The most local rescue centre is:

Millbrook, Chobham, Surrey

Thames Valley Animal Welfare

Ph 0118 947 9963

Diana Brimblecombe Animal Rescue Centre, Wokingham

Ph 0118 934 1122

CLAWS, Maidenhead

(Cat Lovers Animal Welfare Society)

0118 934 1699

Email: info@c-l-a-w-s.org.uk

The Blue Cross

Ph 01993 822651

Email: info@bluecross.org.uk

PDSA

Ph 0800 917 2509

Make and Distribute a Missing Poster

What to include in your poster:

- Include at least one clear colour photo
- Describe your cat fully - long/shorthaired, breed, colour, sex, distinguishing features (eg markings, limp).... if your cat was wearing a collar then mention it may/may not still have this on (just in case it has been lost too).
- Be sure to mention where they went missing from (include a road name, postcode and area).
- Posters are available from Cats Protection.

NB: Moisture can rapidly deteriorate the quality of a poster making photos unrecognisable and text unreadable. If possible always laminate your posters.

Consider photocopying the poster into A5 leaflets to drop through letterboxes in the neighbourhood. Many cats 'go missing' simply because they are befriended by a neighbour.



The Cat Vet Home Visiting Clinic (The Cat Vet Ltd)

T: 07981 250995 Email: jo@thecatvet.co.uk Web: www.thecatvet.co.uk

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Places to display your posters:

- **Local shop windows/noticeboards**
- **Post Offices**
- **Lampposts (check with your local council first)**
- **Schools**
- **Churches and community halls**
- **Sport and recreation centres.**
- **Train/Bus stations**
- **Petrol stations**
- **Pubs/restaurants**
- **Police** - take a more personal approach and walk in to your local police station with a poster rather than phoning the switchboard. Ask if they will let you put a poster up... they can only say "no". Request the contact number for your local beat bobby or Community Support Office (PCSO) and ask them to circulate that your cat is missing so they can keep their eyes peeled while they are patrolling.

Widen your search

Widen your search to hedgerows, open ground, woodland, farmland - ask for permission to check in agricultural buildings. Often cats get carried away on their adventures then become disorientated and unable to find their way home.

Check with your local council's refuse department - in case your cat was knocked down on the road and has been collected. Contact your local Council to see if they have picked up a cat from the roadside as they are obliged to keep records of cats collected and to retain identity information. Unfortunately most councils have no facility for checking for microchips, so they will not contact you in this circumstance.

Contact the local fire brigade to ask if they have been called out recently to rescue any cats from trees etc.

Additional ideas

Register your cat with local and national lost and found agencies

Many of these agencies operate on the internet and can provide excellent standout posters with all the necessary information, social media coverage etc. They can also provide a general contact number for

information about your cat, rather than your personal details and can take anonymous calls from members of the public who may have useful information but not want to come forward (eg road traffic accidents involving cats). Many can work in conjunction with pet insurers.

Some examples include:

Animal Search UK Ph 01244 355 247 24 hours a day 7 days a week (free)

National Pet Register (free)

Pet Search UK - a nationwide charity with 306 local registers of local lost and found cats
(ph 0121 7434133)

Missing Pets Bureau Ph 0870 1600 999

Missing Pet Search Ph 0844 248 7920

Cat Chat Forum

www.amiissingpet.co.uk

www.petslocated.com/ (Annual fee of ~ £10 to advertise your cat as missing)

www.actiononmissingcats.org.uk (an unusual website but you need to click the links on the side or the area that says "Our Mission" to enter the site)

Take out an advert in a local paper & approach a local radio station - see if they will put out an appeal.

Surround your garden with familiar smells/items to help guide a lost/confused cat home

Leave your cat's favourite toy or piece of his (unwashed) bedding in your garden, ideally somewhere sheltered from rain. Also leave out an unwashed item of your clothing, which will have your smell on it, again in a sheltered place

Put outside the contents of your Hoover bag and/or any used litter from your cat's tray

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According to the Missing Pet Bureau, 3,200 cats go missing every week. Unfortunately some of these cats are victims of fatal road traffic accidents or other misadventures and the hardest part is potentially never knowing whether this is the case or not. Acting quickly and thoroughly when trying to find your cat can help you to have some closure and importantly give you the assurance that you have done the best that you can to get a happier outcome.

Don't give up hope as many cats turn up many months, even years, after originally going missing!

I wish you all the best and if I can be of any help please contact me.

Best wishes

Jo Lewis

Jo Lewis MRCVS

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