

WHAT MAKES A GREAT LOST AND FOUND WEBSITE?



All content should be easy to find, located no more than two clicks away from your site's homepage. If possible, create links/tabs on your main page that link directly to "I lost my animal" and "I found a lost animal" resources. Separating each category will help quickly offer viewers information on their specific needs.



Lost and Found websites should be regularly audited to ensure the information is current, remains valuable, and all links are still working.



Keep in mind that people visiting these pages likely have an immediate need. If they've lost a pet, they may be worried or discouraged. If they found a lost animal, they may be unsure of what to do next. Write your content in a voice that is clear, friendly, and helpful (focusing on the "do"s, not the "do not"s).



Make your content clear and actionable so a reader can self-serve. If a visitor finds everything needed to accomplish their goal, the need to speak with someone at your shelter will be minimized.



All links in the website should be "live", meaning they click out to the resource you are citing. An easy to find link to a list of lost and found animals (whether in the shelter or private homes/foster care) should be available.



Create an easy-to-use online form for the public to submit a lost or found report that includes photos and contact information. Making this form easy to find and complete will increase the number of people who use it.

I FOUND A LOST ANIMAL

Notes for Shelter: Consider language that thanks the finder for helping the lost animal. Tell the finder that they are very likely to find the animal's home if they follow the tips you provide. Remind the finder that a lost animal, even one who is on the street for a day or less, can easily look disheveled and scared. Their scruffy appearance does not mean this animal was not loved and cared for by its family.

Action Items for Finder:

- 1.** If the found animal is wearing a tag with a phone number, call the number immediately and leave a message if you reach voicemail. Try sending a text message since the number you see may be for a mobile phone. Most people open text messages at a higher rate than accepting a call from an unknown number.
- 2.** If safe to do so, walk the animal around the area where it was found and ask anyone who may be there if they recognize the animal. Try asking everyone you see: families, U.S. Postal workers, delivery personnel, and so on.
- 3.** After trying the phone number and asking persons nearby, bring the animal to a veterinary office where it can be scanned for a microchip. In addition to a veterinary office, chip scanning can be performed almost anywhere pet chips are sold (such as a PetSmart store).

If a chip is detected, use this link to find the registered owner: [PetMicrochipLookup.Org](#) The place that scanned the animal can help you with this step. Offer a way for the finder to get in touch with you or someone at the shelter if needed. If there is an email account that is monitored with any frequency, consider this option and be honest about how long it will take someone to get back to the finder.

- 4.** Take a facial photo of the animal and register it as found with [Finding Rover](#).
- 5.** File found animal reports with local animal shelters. could be looking for their lost pet in another location.

Note: Include the link to your found animal submission form, along with any link to nearby shelters. Explain in the text that a lost animal will often travel when panicked, and their home and their families could be looking for their lost pet in another location.

I FOUND A LOST ANIMAL (cont...)

6. Create a found animal flyer and post in the area where the animal was found, especially major intersections or at stop signs so they are easy to see.

Note: Include a link explaining how to make a flyer, such as this: <https://search.petfbi.org/flyer.html>. Offer assistance in printing flyers at the shelter if needed, not everyone has a printer at home.

7. Post a photo and information about the found animal on the following sites (Note: include direct links):

- Nextdoor Community Pages
- Neighborhood Facebook pages
- Community lost and found Facebook pages (include links to the most highly utilized pages)
- Craigslist.com community pages

8. Check to the lost animals reported by the public Check this page frequently for pets reported as missing

Note: Insert link to your found pet alerts. Make sure to include information on what to do if a match is detected. The shelter should be a resource at this point.

9. After finding an animal, it is best to keep the animal with you (and at your home) while continuing efforts to find the missing family. If necessary and possible, temporarily foster the animal until their home is found.

Note: If support is available from the shelter (such as pet food, a crate, and vaccinations), make it clear here.

Some agencies require direct management of the fostering process for the animal. If that is the case, then make this process as easy as possible for the finder, being sure to offer praise and thanks for their help in keeping the pet safe until the family is found. You cannot overdo thanks for someone in this situation.

10. Not all finders are in a position to do everything listed here. If you are unable to directly help in returning an animal home, follow these instructions.

Note: Link out to, or clearly detail how a found animal can enter the sheltering system. Again, keep in mind, this person did the right thing by contacting the shelter for help.

I LOST AN ANIMAL

Notes for Shelter: Use language that inspires hope and promotes swift action on the part of the pet owner. Offering a message of encouragement is vital. Remind pet owners that animals are often found by Good Samaritans and not always taken to a shelter. It is not uncommon for weeks, and sometimes months, to go by before an animal and its family are reunited. Do not give up hope! Keep searching.

Action Items for Pet Owner:

- 1.** If your community is active on Nextdoor, immediately report the animal as missing so neighbors can be on the lookout

Note: Embed Nextdoor link and a link to the App Store.

- 2.** If the animal has a microchip, immediately contact your microchip registry or the place where you purchased the chip so that the animal can be flagged as lost. If the animal's chip information is unknown, contact the shelter or rescue where the animal was adopted for assistance. If the chip was implanted by a veterinarian, that information should be contained in the animal health records.

- 3.** Immediately file a lost animal form. Shelters post lost reports on their websites so they can be viewed by the public and reunited with their families

Note: Insert a link to your online Found Pet submission form, or instructions on how that can be done. Encourage pet owners to file missing pet reports with all area shelters.

- 4.** Search here (insert shelter's lost pet URL) for animals that may have been brought to the shelter.

Note: Include links to nearby shelters' "found pet" pages as well. Shelters are encouraged to publish found animal reports on their websites and encourage those who lost an animal to check frequently. Clearly detail instructions on what to do if their pet is spotted.

I LOST AN ANIMAL (cont...)

5. Register the animal with [Finding Rover](#) and report the animal as being lost. If already registered with Finding Rover, log into your account and report the animal as being lost. Other sites to consider also include [PetHarbor](#) and [PetFBI](#).
6. If the animal is wearing a rabies tag administered by a veterinarian, notify the veterinarian immediately that the animal is lost and give them your best contact information.
7. Visit your local shelters in person (if allowed).

Note: If the shelter is allowing walk-throughs, provide clear instructions on how and when this can be done; encourage frequent visits if possible. Also, include information on how to reclaim an animal that is found on the website. If a walk through is conducted with negative results, provide the customer with other resources and relevant information such as a tips guide for each species (some dogs are very approachable, others are not), a poster template and the possibility of renting a trap.

8. Post flyers with a photo of the missing pet and multiple methods to contact you if found. Use this [Free Found Pet Poster Template](#).

Note: Offer assistance in printing flyers at the shelter if needed, not everyone has a printer at home.

9. Walk the neighborhood. Talk to anyone who may have seen your pet, including U.S. Postal workers, delivery, landscapers, and others and alert them to the missing animal.