

Introduction

Dogs go missing in a variety of different circumstances. You may have fears it has been stolen or there may be evidence indicating how the dog escaped from your garden or car. It may have disappeared when out walking.

Don't Panic

Phone a friend and ask for their urgent help. Remember that you will be a distressed 'relative' and perhaps unable to make sensible or logical decisions. A small group of friends or family will be a great support.

Remember that the big majority of dogs will be reunited with their owners.

This pack contains a variety of prepared documents that will assist you in mounting a coordinated and logical search for your dog.

Every search will be different and not all documents will be required for every search.

You may wish to create your own additional pages to assist you.

Step One Complete the sheet headed 'Circumstances' detailing how your dog went missing.

Step Two Complete the 'Missing Dog Details' form.

Step Three Inform the Police and local Dog Wardens,

Step Four Plan your search.

Success is common in the first 24 hours, but it is not unusual for the search to take up to two weeks before the dog is recaptured. Don't give up.

Find one member of the team to be responsible for food and drink for you and the searchers. This could be someone who is not fit enough to spend all day searching but is happy to stay at base and take over your kitchen.

Choose a suitable room to become the Search Control. It should have as a minimum one telephone line, backed up by additional mobile phones. A computer with a printer is also desirable so that documents can be copied or faxed.

Wall and table space to study maps and plans will also be required.

Start a search log as soon as possible. This is to record exactly what has been done and acts as a reminder so that tasks are not duplicated or not done at all. At the end of the search it will provide a most valuable record of everybody's efforts in finding your dog again.

Circumstances

When did you know the dog was missing?

Note date and time.

Where exactly was the dog last seen?

When was dog last seen and by whom?

Note date, time and person's full name

Are there any clues as to what has happened? Garden gate open? Hole dug under fence? Slipped lead on walk, Chased the milkman? Lost whilst chasing rabbits etc

If there is evidence of a break in to steal your dog do not contaminate any evidence do not touch doors or locks that may have been forced or windows that have been broken. Ensure police are informed

MISSING DOG

Missing From:

Pet Name:

Age:

Kennel Name:

D of B:

Breed:

Sex:

Colour and description:

Microchip Details:

Distinguishing Features:

Beginning the Search

If your dog has gone missing from your home, start your search by rechecking every room in the house. Check and re check sheds, outhouses, garages, stables and kennels.

Leave a gate and/or a door that your dog would normally use open so that if it returns on its own it can get in and surprise you.

Alert your immediate neighbours and ask them to thoroughly check their property.

If your dog has gone missing whilst you are out walking, call out his name and walk around the general area in which it disappeared. Ask every member of the public that you meet and if there have been any sightings move in that general direction. If you have a mobile phone contact family members and friends to assist and get someone to go to your home to monitor the phone.

If you have reason to believe the dog has been kidnapped or stolen inform the police immediately giving them the circumstances of your loss and your full contact details.

Then go home and contact friends and family for support and help.

If you have had no success in finding your dog after about 3 hours begin the process of a formal search. Start the search log, begin to make telephone calls to the various organisations and begin to post information on the websites. If you do not use a computer or the internet ask someone who does to help you.

Hopefully within about three hours some others will be free to help.

Look for some large scale maps of the area concerned. Send someone out to buy one if necessary from a local garage. In urban areas use a street plan map and in more rural areas use an Explorer Ordnance Survey map with a two and a half inch to the mile scale.

Find the telephone directory or use directory inquiry services to obtain the relevant phone numbers and record them on the sheets.

Traps and Night Vision goggles are held by representatives of the Bearded Collie Club and are based across the country (see page 10 for details). Contact the representative nearest to you for assistance.

Leaflets

Try and find a recent photograph of your dog that could be easily reproduced in to a simple 'lost' leaflet.

Get one of your helpers to prepare a lost dog poster on a computer. Include the word 'Lost' very prominently. State when and where it was lost from and a telephone number to call with any information. Include the picture and a simple layman's description of the dog and its name.

It is usually helpful to offer an undisclosed reward for information leading to recovery of the dog. Do not indicate a financial figure on the leaflet as this can encourage ransom demands.

Print your first batch of leaflets from a domestic computer but then arrange for a local printer to print a large batch and include some large A3 size posters as well. A5 size posters are adequate for general use and leafleting.

To protect the posters from the weather purchase a box of clear plastic document sleeves available from most stationers and even Tesco's. Tape or pin the posters to telegraph poles, post leaflets through front doors, but also knock and ask if the dog has been seen. Leave the poster as a reminder and point out the phone number to ring if there are any sightings.

Whenever possible leafleting should be done by helpers working in pairs'

Put leaflets on the windscreens of cars parked at supermarket car parks. Do this at least three times on several days if necessary.

Put leaflets at the local bus and rail stations, pubs, clubs and schools. If appropriate also leave at youth clubs, village halls scouts and guides as well as working men's clubs, restaurants and public houses.

A tactful phone call to local schools asking the head to ask all the children to look out for the dog is well worth while and greatly increases the number of pairs of eyes searching for you. Leave plenty of leaflets at the school.

Posters and leaflets should be placed in all local vets' and rescue organisations including the PDSA and the RSPCA. Don't forget the local dog wardens and give them a leaflet.

Take leaflets and posters to every pet shop and arrange for delivery drivers of pet food to have a supply to give to their customers.

If you have any local truckers' cafes or lorry parks ensure that they are all leafleted and encouraged to look out for the dog.

The more you can saturate the area with leaflets the more likely you are to get sightings. Aim to leaflet everywhere, within a three mile radius to start with.

Map Plotting

Identify the point on the map where your dog was last seen. Study the map and consider directions the dog might be tempted to take. These would include the normal routes it goes on walks, the route back to a previous home if you have moved recently or back to your car if out in the country.

Mark on the map any natural boundaries that your dog would be unlikely to cross.

These would include things like fenced railway lines, rivers, canals, reservoirs, lakes, motorways and of course a coast line.

Dogs can easily travel 3-5 miles in a day and are likely to rest and find shelter at night.

Plan each small area of search, allocate people to do the search and leaflet drops and record details on the search log. If possible give each person a copy map of the area allocated to them and ask them to record any details of searches not completed or areas they could not access so they can be repeated the next day or followed up.

If you can put a transparent overlay on the map it would enable marker pens to be used to show the areas searched and leafleted each day.

Complete the search log and keep it up to date so that you can see at a glance where to search next.

If the search area covers open ground and farm land be sure to try and get permission to search on the land rather than risk allegations of trespass. Most farmers will be helpful but some may be concerned about the risk of the dog worrying livestock or disturbing game birds.

Whenever there is a sighting of the missing dog, which is thought to be genuine, plot the location on the map and then reconsider the priority areas for search. If several sightings have been made, try to second guess the dog's most likely direction of travel and organise searchers to cover that area first.

The Searchers

Searching and distributing leaflets can be very tiring. The search controller has a responsibility to look after the health and welfare of the search teams. Do make sure that people work in pairs and have at least one mobile phone between them. If available, simple two way radios can also be useful.

Encourage contact with the control every one to two hours so that the controller always knows where the searchers are.

Ensure that searchers have equipment and clothing compatible with the weather conditions and the terrain they are searching.

Waterproofs or sun tan lotion, snacks, hot drinks or cold drinks ensure they are correctly prepared. Searchers will need maps and leaflets with note pad and pen to record any useful information.

Searchers should also carry a slip lead, dog titbits and other available item to help should the dog be found by them.

Whilst it is difficult to dictate to searchers who are volunteers exactly what is required of them, try to discourage people doing their own thing without informing search control. Encourage meal and rest breaks and bring people back to base at the first signs they have had enough and need time out. Try to encourage searchers to pace themselves and not to do too much on the first day, more help may well be needed over the next few days.

A meeting of all the searchers at the beginning and end of each search day allows for team building and mutual encouragement as well as an opportunity to brief everyone about progress. A simple meal together in the evening helps to maintain morale and the incentive to keep going.

When the dog is safely returned to the owners the searchers may well want to spend some time together and discuss their activities during the search. This is a healthy part of the debrief process and should be encouraged. It is not a good idea however for a lot of people to try and see the found dog immediately. It needs time alone with the owners in the first few days.

Bad News

Sadly, on some occasions it is possible that your dog is going to be injured or killed in a road traffic collision. The Local Authority refuse department and street cleaning departments should be approached. They can be asked to inform you if they deal with a dog matching the description of your dog. If the search is prolonged get a friend to check back with them on a weekly basis.

If you live near a Local Authority boundary make sure that neighbouring Authorities are also informed.

If you live in an area of other natural hazards including mines and water courses contact the appropriate authorities but do not try and search them yourself.

Rescue and Capture Equipment

Several sets of rescue and capture equipment are held by the Bearded Collie Club and are strategically placed at different locations with the eventual aim that equipment should be available anywhere in the UK within two to three hours.

The equipment is currently located as follows:



No.	Trap Holder	Telephone No.
1	Graham & Doreen McErlane	01473-658545
2	David Hailstone	01553-674653
3	Shirley Hinchliffe	01473-464021
4	Paula Brooks	01600-740694
5	Jane & Jason Scott	01884-821201
6	Gill Kedzierski	02380-666328
7	Tony & Chris Burscough	01352-711964
8	Alex Prescott	01772-814109
9	Pat Wincott	0121-705-7004
10	Marilyn Thorpe	01482-849238
11	Kay Farrier	0191-243-4432
12	Janet Jemmett	01875-340910
13	Don Moir	01683-220588
14	Ailsa Gill	01651-882264

The following also hold Night Vision Goggles:

Patricia Wincott – 0121-705-7004

Jason Scott – 01884-821201

Ailsa Gill – 01651-882264

In case of difficulty contact any Officer or Committee Member of the Bearded Collie Club.

(Ensure that the phone number on the leaflet is attended continuously and not used for other calls except in an emergency. Keep that number for incoming calls only. Assess possible sightings from very unlikely to highly possible All calls should be logged fully with as much detail as possible and should always be handled politely and followed up carefully).

Sightings

Ensure that two people go to investigate the call and one should be known well by the dog if at all possible.

A positive sighting is a boost for every search as it confirms the dog is still alive and not kidnapped or killed on the road. Make sure that the news is spread to all searchers and posted on the web sites.

If a sighting is confirmed as definite or highly likely ensure the search control is informed immediately. Plot the exact position on the map, so that if several sightings are reported a trend and direction of travel can be predicted. If the dog has been captured or rescued then simply go and get it. If however it was seen on the loose, plan to surround it by as many helpers as possible.

Try to avoid causing the dog to panic and run. A chase should be avoided at all costs.

Call the owners to the area as the missing dog is more likely to respond to their voice.

It may be helpful to have other dogs involved that the missing dog will respond to. It is also very helpful to have food and other titbits to encourage the dog to come. If the dog has been missing for more than a few days it may well be disorientated and revert to a wild existence, it may well not recognise its owners.

The use of Traps

Most cage traps are of similar design with a bi-fold type door which locks in an up or open position when the trap is set. A foot plate is located in the cage. When the footplate is stepped on, it releases a side rod which allows the front door to close quickly at an angle so trapping the dog. It is important that the right sized cage is used otherwise the door may attempt to shut on the rear of the dog. This would startle but not hurt the dog. The dog would back off and the door of the cage spring shut. The best place for a trap cage is in an area where there have been one or more sightings. It is important that you obtain permission from the land owner to use the trap. Choose a fairly private spot to avoid onlookers. Make sure you have practised using the cage in advance and that you are confident in its use. Ensure it is on firm ground and cannot wobble. If in any doubt, ask for help from someone who has used traps before.

Wet dog food including portions of meat, sausages, and strong cheese are ideal bait.

The food should be at the rear of the cage and it is a good idea to put a small bowl of water in the trap as well. A few small portions of food outside the cage might help to coax the dog into the trap.

Make sure that the door closing mechanism is not in any way obstructed by items in the cage, and that the action of the foot plate is not impeded. Other items to consider for the trap could be a dog blanket, a favourite toy, some of the owner's dirty worn clothes or if you are trying to catch a dog, even an item soaked in urine from a bitch in season could prove attractive.

Camouflaging the trap is also desirable. If a conventional camouflage sheet is not available use a brown or green shower curtain or tarpaulin. Cover all over the cage except the entrance. Make sure the entrance is not obscured or the closing mechanism obstructed. Put some branches and twigs around the cage and on top to create a desirable den.

Once the trap is set, secure it with a lock and chain to a fence or tree trunk and add a notice in case anybody else discovers the cage with something in it and decides to release it. The note should explain the purpose of the trap and a phone number to contact you if the trap is activated. It is always possible the trap could ensnare a fox or badger and you would then have to release them.

What to do when the dog is spotted

Be prepared

If your dog is spotted you will need to be prepared. All searchers should carry a slip lead, and suitable bait. Choose what you know the dog would like. Suggestions would include meat, sausage, salmon treats, strong cheese, luncheon meat and ham. Squeaky toys are often popular with dogs and so are Frisbee-type retrieval toys.

Be quiet and patient

Stay calm, don't panic and avoid a chase at all costs. Dogs often respond better to women, especially those known to them.

Attempt to lure the dog towards you. You have to get the dog to overcome its fear. Try to position yourself on the ground below the dog's eye level. Use others as back up but keep them back and low to the ground. Ensure the dog concentrates on just one person. Too many people will alarm the dog especially if there is a lot of movement. Once on the ground avoid sudden movements or noise but talk to the dog with a gentle calming voice. Have the food ready and when flat on the ground offer it to the dog. Toss bits of food towards the dog leading it slowly closer to you. Try perhaps to pretend to eat it. If you have a favourite toy, have it on the ground beside you. This may take a long time, be very patient.

Once the dog is within an arm's reach of you, a decision must be made as to how to catch it. If the dog is at ease try a tickle and petting under the chin. If it has a collar, grab it tightly and hang on. Get a slip lead on as quickly as possible. If there is no collar, just grab anything you can and hang on until a slip lead is in place.

Care after Capture

Once your dog is finally captured it is likely to be both mentally and physically very stressed and will not cope with sudden changes or excitement and noise.

Take the dog home and quietly assess the dog in a room with no more than two people in. Allow it some water to drink and perhaps some food, but limit it to reasonable amounts.

Allow it to rest and adjust to the home surroundings. Do not be in a hurry to bath and groom it, there is plenty of time over the next few days. Keep the dog away from other dogs for the first twenty four hours and allow a lot of peace and quiet.

Assess the dog for obvious signs of illness or injury and arrange for a review by a Vet fairly quickly. You need to consider infestation with ticks or fleas, and scratches or puncture wounds. Intestinal parasites can result from scavenging for food so it will be advisable to check the dogs stools for ova and parasites, and ensure no other signs of infection.

Expect the dog to take some time to return to a normal routine. He or she may guard its food or respond with fear at loud sounds or other threatening situations.

As soon as practical inform all the searchers and other helpers that your dog is found.

Arrange for all your contacts to be told the search is over and arrange for posters to be taken down.

Thanking everybody for a job well done is especially important and perhaps a small gift for those who were of special help and support will go a long way in cementing friendships for the future.

Written by: Dr K Hines

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Master Event Log

Date	Time	Event

Reminders

Actions to complete
carried forward from previous days

Actions	Done by	Time