

## What to Do When a Lost Dog is Sighted

The most important rule to understand when the lost dog you are looking for is sighted, is not to chase. By chasing the dog – even a dog you know – you scare it away from familiar ground. A lost dog is in flight mode – if they don't respond and come to your voice, chasing the dog will only make matters worse. These steps are designed to inform you how to catch the dog without chasing. If the dog runs, however, re-assess whether these general guidelines fit your situation.

Before you start out on a sighting call, make sure your phone is on vibrate or silent.

### 1.) Assume a nonthreatening position

**-You should be seated with your back to the dog, keep the dog in sight using peripheral vision and soft glances over your shoulder.**

**-Never look the dog straight on.**

**-You should never make eye contact with the dog.**

**-Move as little as possible, all movements should be slight**

**-All searchers who are within eye sight of the dog or who can see the dog, should assume a non-threatening position and stop all movement!**

### 2.) Get another dog into the area

**-Ideally the search dog should be a dog that the lost dog knows**

**-A search dog should: be confident, calm, relaxed with the handler**

**-A search dog should not: be dog aggressive or have resource guarding issues, or reactive**

### 3.) Get treats

**-Start by feeding the treats to the dog you have with you to give the lost dog an example. It also shows that other dogs do not find you threatening.**

- You want to toss high value treats to the dog, gently, so you don't spook the dog.

-If the dog spooks, remain where you are and give them a chance to come back and investigate

- High value treats are generally soft and have a meaty smell. Ideal high value treats include: Zuke's, hot dog, lunch meat, etc.

### 4.) Approaching the dog

**-This should only be attempted by one person at a time**

**-Do not start to approach until the dog is in a sitting position. If the dog is standing, it will just run off when you start moving**

**-All movements should be slow, stay as low to the ground as possible, you should remain facing away from the dog**

**-It is best if you can move while the dog is eating the high value treats, you will likely have to alternate forward movement with giving the dog treats**

**-The key is to move slowly and to not rush the process, it can take over 45 minutes to get into a position to catch the dog**

**-If the dog runs off but has eaten at this spot, make note, this is now a great spot to set up a feeding station.**

### **5.) Catching the dog**

**-You should not attempt to catch the dog until you are within arm's reach from your sitting position. If you can get the dog to come to you, when you get close, using high value treats, this is ideal.**

**-If the dog is still wearing their collar, try and grab the chain or connector piece of the martingale, this tightens the collar. If you grab the regular part of the collar, the collar will not tighten and you risk popping the collar off of the dog!**

**-If the dog spooks and backs away, give the dog a chance to relax and begin approaching again.**

### **TIPS AND TRICKS FOR CATCHING A LOST DOG**

**-Try and avoid cornering the dog if possible, the dog is in flight or fight mode, so avoid taking away its' option of flight**

**-Avoid trying to surround the dog, this will make the dog edgy, and will be harder to get it calmed down enough to catch**

**-Don't rush, this process can take over 45 minutes.**

**-A regular leash makes a good slip lead, don't try and do collar adjustments after catching the dog. Use a slip lead to get the dog in a car or building then make adjustments**

**If we know where the dog is why don't we just trap it?**

**Sometimes we do, but if we can grab the dog, that's the ideal solution. Trapping is stressful and in a standard trap, if the dog isn't in the right spot, the dog can be badly injured when the trap shuts. In extreme weather conditions, traps **MUST** be checked every 3-4 hours. You are also likely to catch a variety of wildlife. Be careful when releasing wildlife (raccoons, skunks, foxes are considered part of the rabies vector and must be released near where they are trapped. Squirrels and opossums are not rabies carriers, but they still bite hard).**