



MY CAT HAS GONE MISSING

Firstly, try not to panic. Take your time to assess the situation and establish the exit your cat escaped from. Once the initial euphoria of freedom has worn off, your cat will become frightened very quickly and a frightened cat will usually go to ground very close to home. A frightened cat will also usually travel in a straight line rather than zig zag all over the place.

Therefore you need to establish where your cat escaped from, walk forward in a straight line from there, looking under bushes and up trees. Put your cat's used litter tray outside, along with his bedding and smelly cat food such as pilchards or tuna. You can even empty the contents of your Hoover bag outside or put unwashed clothes on the washing line - anything to get the smell of your home outside for your cat to recognise.

If your cat has decided to hide then he/she is unlikely to respond to your calls during daylight hours. The very best time to call your cat is at dawn/dusk. Both these times are their natural hunting times, meaning they will be more alert and more inclined to answer your calls. A mob-handed attempt to locate your cat will definitely not work. They will not respond to strangers and a very calm, quiet, approach is the best way forward. Try sitting outside at about 5am (sorry!) opening tins of food and packets of treats, calling gently and listening carefully for a response.

Looking outdoor is the most urgently course of action, so make calls to rally friends to do other things to help (they can be doing posters for you etc and calling round everyone needed) – you are the one who needs to be calling your cat in the voice you use for food time. If your cat is a Strawberry cat, you can phone us and one of the volunteers will start ASAP alerting



online pages as we will have photos and details. We have spent days helping cats who got lost who were homed by us previously. Thankfully everyone has been found – but the hardest to find was one who was accidentally let out via a window within days of arriving after adoption.

If your cat is microchipped (which it certainly will be if it is a Strawberry cat, although we have found some chips do come out after implant, but we usually re test just before adoption which is usually will be some time after implant) then contact the microchip company asap along with local vets and rescue centres.

Approach directly or give leaflets to your neighbours asking them to check sheds and garages and sign up to Lost and Found Pet sites for your area on Facebook. Regarding microchips - if you are getting your cat chipped yourself then it is important that you receive acknowledgement from the microchip company.

Please don't assume that because your vet has chipped your cat then all is well. You **MUST** receive some form of acknowledgement of registration from the company, either by email or in the post. This will usually happen within a few days of the microchipping.

If the chip details are not registered then the whole procedure is worthless so if you don't hear anything then you need to contact the microchip company yourself to see what has gone wrong. Many Strawberry chips are initially registered in the name of the rescue – so when you call the chip company, check it was re - registered in your name. If they have not done this, send them a copy of adoption form and a letter with details needed to go on the

chip. While it is being re reg - as long as the rescue know your cat is lost, we would be contacted but the chip company can switch over details quickly in case of an emergency.

Additionally, if any of your personal details change at any time, ie, address, phone, etc, don't forget to notify the microchip company.

Make sure you check the other side of any roads close to you in case your cat as crossed over but has then become too frightened to cross back again.



If you know where your cat is but cannot capture it then organisations like Cats Protection/Blue Cross/RSPCA should be able to lend you a humane trap.

As long as there is a food source close by for your cat then there is no need for him to travel, so keep putting out food, keep calling in the early hours and never give up hope.

If your cat returns after being away for several days and you have a suspicion that they might have become locked in somewhere then please get him/her checked by your vet as a cat who has not eaten for a while can develop liver problems, especially if it is a large cat (hepatic lipodosis).

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FELINE BEHAVIOUR

One of our team has this comment - For anyone wanting to enter the fascinating world of feline behaviour, check out the range of books written by leading behaviourist Vicky Halls. Her books are informative, poignant and amusing all at the same time and her case histories will probably strike a chord with most cat owners. My personal favourite book is "Cat Confidential".

