

FOUND OR STRAY ANIMAL INFORMATION

Hi,

Thank you for contacting **Molly's Mutts & Meows** about the dog, cat, rabbit, etc. that you have found. Since so many people contact us for help, we have written this letter to provide you some helpful tips and an idea of what **Molly's Mutts & Meows** can and can't do for you.

FOUND OR STRAY ANIMALS

Let's face it: rescuing an animal can often be a disruption in our everyday lives. We have jobs, families, and pets of our own. But what rescuing an animal, saving its life and finding it a loving home can also be is one of the most rewarding experiences we will ever have. At the end of the road when we look back on our lives we will remember that act of kindness and how we made a difference.

Starting Point:

- A dog or cat that is wearing a tag or license probably has an owner looking for them. You should make an attempt to contact them. Accidents do happen: A child leaves the door open; workmen or gardeners forget to close the gate. Hopefully there is a loving owner out there searching for this animal.
- If the dog or cat has no collar but looks well fed, is in good physical condition, and easy to approach it could very well have an owner looking for him/her.
- If an owner can not find his/her pet close to home, the first place they will search is the animal shelters. Bringing an animal to a city shelter is hard. By bringing an animal to the shelter, you will increase the chances of the owner finding his/her lost pet, but at the same time it's a Catch 22 because 70% if the animals that enter these shelters are destroyed. Many well-meaning people keep lost pets at their homes, not realizing the animal's owner is looking for the stray pet at the animal shelter. If you choose to bring an animal to the shelter there is a way to keep track of the animal. (See tracking an animal in a city shelter below).

At the very least post a "Found" flyer at each of those shelters.

With overcrowding in the city shelters in the city of Los Angeles the shelters provide "found boards" at each of the six locations.

To find the shelter closest to you please visit LA Animal Services website:

<http://www.laanimalservices.com/>

Other helpful options:

- Have the animal scanned for a microchip. Many responsible pet owners have their animals micro-chipped these days. In some cases an animal has lost or is not wearing his collar but might have a microchip. AVID is the most widely used chip but there are other brands out there. City shelters are supposed to scan each animal turned in for a chip. Most local vets will be sympathetic to your cause and scan the animal for free. If the animal is chipped you can contact the microchip company so they can contact the owner.
- Post "found flyers" where you found the animal and surrounding vet offices, or places the community would frequent. i.e. Supermarket and coffee shops.
- Check the lost and found section of your local papers. Post a "found add." Do not give too much of a description. Just give a generic write-up. Here's an example:

FOUND DOG NEAR VENICE/OVERLAND: Pug, no collar. Please call 310-555-1234. Proof of ownership is required.

- Ask neighbors in the area where you found the dog if anyone (including the neighborhood kids who can be very observant) if they recognize the animal.

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Do you think you found the owner? Good work! But the sad situation is that many people answer “found pet” adds to sell animals to labs, or use for dog fighting or breeding. Suggestions to ensure you found the animal’s rightful owner:

- 1) Ask the person to describe the animal in detail and perhaps describe one thing about the animal that was omitted in your add.
- 2) Ask for Identification. Ask them for their full name and call back number. Hang up and tell them you will call them back to make sure the number is real. Ask to see their driver’s license.
- 3) Ask them for their vet’s contact information and confirm it.
- 4) Ask them to bring a photo of the animal.
- 5) Observe the animal being reunited with its owner. Does the animal recognize the person?
- 6) Follow your instincts.

Strays who were abandon or born on the street (no possible owner):

Nothing is more heartbreaking than seeing that stray dog running through traffic with that fear in its eyes. Often the animal is too afraid or wild (feral) to be caught and can result in fear biting or car accidents so BE CAREFUL. Sometimes the animal cannot be caught until it has exhausted itself. Feral animals will need to be trapped. In this case get help from an experienced trapper and use a humane trap. The folks at Feral Cat Alliance are very savvy on TNR (trap-neuter-release) and you may want to contact them if you have a feral cat you want to help. They also may be able to help you trap a feral dog. Unfortunately, **Molly’s Mutts & Meows** is not very helpful on this topic, so please research it a bit more with other rescue groups.

What happens if I take a lost or stray pet to a city shelter?

The statistics aren’t good. 70% of all animals brought to our city shelters are euthanized. So it’s a Catch 22. You want to do the right thing and reunite a pet with its owner but not have the pet euthanized. Solution: track the animal, know the score.

How do I track if its owners at the city shelter recover the animal?

When you drop an animal off it’s vitally important to get its IMPOUND NUMBER. Each animal is assigned a number. Without that number you cannot track the animal.

Know the score:

Lost or stray animals are held for 4 business days for their owners to reclaim them. During that time they are not available for adoption to the public. As soon as they become available for adoption they can also be killed at the shelter’s discretion. There are many factors that prompt euthanasia and sometimes it’s simply overcrowding. Don’t assume that because you think an animal is beautiful it will be adopted. Because odds are that it won’t. So put a hold on that animal and if no owner shows up and you want to save its life, get it out of there!

What If I’m an Owner turning in my own pet because I can’t keep it any more? My pet will be adopted right? Sadly you will most likely be bringing your animal to its death. Under the Hayden Law the shelter is required to keep your animal for 4 business days and then it can euthanize it. Please refer to our “Owner Surrender” letter (if you have not already received it) for other options.
You owe it to this animal you originally made a commitment to.

Can Molly’s Mutts & Meows take in the animal I found?

The odds are not good. Why you ask? We get 50-100 people a week asking us to take in animals. It’s just not possible with limited space and funds and the huge pet over-population in Los Angeles. Unfortunately we do not have our own boarding facility where we can take in animals. Honestly, even if we did, we would be full with the thousands of animals that from the LA City Shelters. As we stated earlier, the numbers they euthanize each day (up to 500) are

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staggering. The majority of the animals in our care we rescue from the euthanasia list or we take off the streets ourselves to rehabilitate.

However we do want to help you in some way as **WE LOVE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO HELP FOUND OR STRAY ANIMALS! BUT WE WILL ASK THAT YOU DO YOUR PART TOO.**

Here's what we can do to help you find a home for your stray animal:

If you can keep the animal until a home is found or board him/her, we can list the animal on the www.petfinder.com website, under **Molly's Mutts & Meows Animal Rescue**. These are courtesy listings. People may contact you directly or sometimes they still go through us in which case I'll forward the information. If you need help screening applicants we are glad to help. We can also recommend very good, reasonably priced boarding facilities as well. We prefer to use "cage-free" boarding as it is better for the animal, but we will suggest different options. It is BEST for the animal if you can keep him/her in a HOME environment. Cages cause significant stress for these animals which can lead to behavior problems.

You may have told us this already, but we need to know if the age and breed of the animal, and if it is up to date on vaccines, spayed or neutered, and micro-chipped. Unless we are told otherwise, we check that the animal is ok with other dogs or cats and children. If the animal is not spayed or neutered **we need to have this done**. We run a 501c3 non-profit group and can't have a hand in placing an un-altered animal in a home (barring medical reasons). We can suggest places to get affordable or even free spaying and neutering.

If you have not sent us a picture of the stray/found animal, we will need you to do so. A great picture is CRITICAL as we will post it on our website and petfinder.com. We like to lovingly call these photos "money shots." Please send the photos as a jpeg attachment. **A picture can make all the difference in finding a home.** Do not send a flyer or collage; we need individual photographs from a digital camera.

*(However, if you do have a flyer or collage printed, **POST THEM EVERYWHERE!** The more people see the animal that needs a home, the more likely you are to find the animal a new forever home.)*

Some tips for taking good pictures are:

- Take the shot at the dog or cat's eye level
- Do not use a flash
- Try to get a good background (a solid colored wall, grass, etc.)
- Try not to have people in the picture
- Try and have the dog smiling – a happy dog is always cuter!
- Take a few jpeg photos so we have a choice to use more than one photo on our site.

We require that you ask an adoption fee. This is non-negotiable. If you have incurred out-of-pocket expenses in caring for the dog or cat you may choose to keep it to off-set your expenses. If not, you can donate it to our non-profit group (**Molly's Mutts & Meows**). But this is a must.

We will say it again: **DO NOT GIVE AWAY THE ANIMAL FOR FREE.** There are creeps who look for free dogs and cats to sell to research labs or fighting rings. Paying an adoption fee shows the people care enough to pay, and can afford to care for the animal. We suggest \$200 flat donation. I can forward you a standard, and thorough, adoption contract you are free to use. I can also forward you an application form we use for screening purposes.

Every week I will send out an email to see if your animal still needs a home. If you don't reply, we will take the animal off the website. So please keep us updated as it will help immensely.

Can I show the animal at your adoption days?

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In some cases, we will allow you to show the animal with us at our adoption days too. We do require that the animal is friendly and won't bite. The risk of liability is too great for us if there is a chance your dog/cat is not good with people, other animals, etc. We ask that you take responsibility for showing the animal. We do understand that this is a commitment, so know that we have volunteers to help you! We appreciate your act of compassion and kindness and want to help you if we can.

We will say it again:

Rescuing an animal, saving its life and finding it a loving home is one of the most rewarding experiences we will ever have. At the end of the road when we look back on our lives we will remember that act of kindness and how we made a difference.

We hope this helps.

Best-

Molly's Mutts & Meows



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