



Burmese Cat Association

If Your Cat Goes Missing – Checklist

Cats often go missing and then arrive home late, or even the next morning, wondering what all the fuss is about so wait a few hours before taking action.

Most importantly, please get in touch with our Lost and Found Officer. We have run a Lost and Found Register for many years with excellent results and can provide practical advice and support.

You can use these suggestions for immediate action as a Checklist. The advice is based on work done by Catchat and is reproduced with their permission.

Take Sensible Precautions

If someone calls saying they have found your cat, ask for a detailed description before you go to check. Preferably take someone with you ... and a cat carrier of course!

Be on your guard if you are asked to part with money for the return of your cat. Even if you are happy to offer a reward, please don't hand over money until your cat is safely in your hands.

Don't give up hope!

Cats can disappear for several days and sometimes weeks, particularly in good weather, and eventually return unharmed. They are extremely resourceful and will find food, water and shelter in the most unlikely places. Remember that they are more likely to be close to home and it's often an everyday search over the same ground that brings results.

People will often feed a stray cat for some time before it occurs to them that it may just be lost. Microchipped cats are often reunited with their owners when they have been handed into a shelter or seen a vet.

When your cat comes home

After you've made a big fuss of the cat, offer its favourite dinner and water as it may be dehydrated if it has been locked in somewhere.

Finally, please don't forget to tell everyone involved in the search the good news, including our Lost and Found Officer, and retrieve the posters that you distributed around town!

Your Home and Garden

Check in and around your home and garden several times: -

- ❑ Every room in your house, the loft, the cellar and all of the cupboards
- ❑ Behind curtains, under duvets, behind settees and under beds
- ❑ The washing machine, dishwasher, tumble drier, oven and microwave
- ❑ Chimneys, the dustbin, water butt, compost bin, sheds and the garage
- ❑ Greenhouses, garden sheds, outside toilets and hedgerows
- ❑ Under nearby cars, engine spaces, under car bonnets and in wheel arches
- ❑ If you are having building work done, under floorboards and in any holes large enough for a cat and in the workmen's vans
- ❑ Go out into your garden and around the immediate vicinity of your home late at night or in the early hours, call for your cat and take plenty of time to listen for a reply as, if your cat is shut in somewhere nearby, this is when you are most likely to hear them

Your Neighbourhood

- ❑ Ask your neighbours to check their houses, sheds, garages and gardens. Visit houses at least 10 doors in both directions, on both sides of your road, and also any houses whose gardens back onto yours. Take a photo with you and leave your phone number
- ❑ Go back to any neighbours who were out when you called. Just popping a note through the door doesn't always mean that they will check
- ❑ Make a note of any empty houses for sale and contact the estate agent in case they have shown someone round and shut the cat in

It can be more productive to search for a cat at night when it is quieter and the cat may not be so nervous. Preferably take someone with you.

- ❑ Take some dry food and a cat carrier with you or if your cat is nervous perhaps a towel or pillow case
- ❑ Walk around your local area paying particular attention to any garages, lock-ups, skips, empty properties and overgrown areas
- ❑ Call for your pet by name (you may feel daft at first, but this often works) and take plenty of time to listen for a reply
- ❑ Shaking a box of favourite biscuits or squeezing a favourite squeaky toy may help
- ❑ Stay in one area long enough for your pet to reach you if it is in the vicinity

Phone Calls

The earlier you report your cat missing and the more people who know, the more likely it will be found so contact: -

- ❑ Petlog, if your cat is microchipped, to report that it is missing and check any cats that have been found in your area. Every vet and rescue centre knows about Petlog and they are nearly always the first port of call when a lost animal is brought in
- ❑ Your local vets, not just your own. Any UK Vet can help you to find them all
- ❑ Your local animal rescue organisations and breed Club, if applicable
- ❑ If your cat has been missing for more than a few days, local rescue groups for the locations of any known local feral cat colonies as if your cat has wandered further afield it may latch onto a colony for security, food and company
- ❑ The local fire brigade to ask if they have been called out recently to rescue any cats from trees
- ❑ The Environmental Health Department in your local council. This can be a very difficult call to make but they will be able to tell you if a cat matching your description has been found killed on the road

Advertisements

If you have Pet Insurance check your policy, as help may be available with the cost of advertising or a reward.

A poster or flyer should include: -

- A photograph of your cat as people remember pictures better than words
- A brief description of your cat omitting one important detail so that if someone contacts you saying they have found your cat you can check whether they are genuine
- The date and place your cat was last seen
- A contact telephone number

Make plenty of copies and distribute them as widely as you can: -

- Post them through every door in your immediate area
- Display them at post offices, newsagents, supermarkets, fish and chip shops, corner shops, pet shops, garages, launderettes, hairdressers, pubs ...
- ... at boarding catteries, vets, doctors, dentists, the library, police station, schools ...
- ... on notice boards in community centres, social clubs, bingo halls, church halls and places used by youth clubs, scouts, brownies and playgroups
- Put posters inside plastic wallets to protect them from rain and tie or tape them to telegraph poles, lamp posts, phone boxes, bus shelters and post boxes (but please don't nail them to trees)
- Email the poster to friends in the area and ask them to forward it to others they know
- Make posts on social Websites like Facebook and Twitter and also cat forums
- Put a poster on your own front gate and in your window ...
- ... and in car windows, both yours and neighbours' if they are willing
- Give a copy to postmen, milkmen, dustbin men, window cleaners, lollipop-persons and regular dog-walkers
- Make a note of people on holiday and contact them on their return.
- Offer a reward if you can: it could be a box of chocolates, for example, and doesn't have to be money
- Ask schoolchildren to keep a look-out on their way to and from school as they are often very observant
- Whilst distributing posters, don't forget to check shop windows for a Cat Found notice, just in case!

If you distribute leaflets after dark preferably take someone with you.

You can also: -

- Place a Lost Cat advertisement in local newspapers and check for any Found Cats
- Contact local radio stations as they often broadcast lost and found appeals

Internet

- ❑ Put your cat's details onto lost and found registers on websites such as Catchat and Animal Search UK ...
- ❑ ... and, at the same time, check to see if your cat has been found
- ❑ Use social networking and Emails to tell people in your area

Common Scents

- ❑ Leave your cat's favourite toy or a piece of his unwashed bedding in your garden, ideally somewhere sheltered from rain
- ❑ Also leave out an unwashed item of your clothing, again in a sheltered place
- ❑ Put the contents of your vacuum bag outside along with any used litter from your cat's tray

All these will have familiar smells and may help to keep your cat in the area or even guide it home.