



HOW TO CATCH A PANICKED DOG

Missing Pet Partnership

www.missingpetpartnership.org

Some dogs that are scared off by fireworks, thunder, or other traumatic events will be so terrified that they will not even come to their owners. While some dogs will ultimately calm down and then approach people, other dogs will continue to run from everyone. In many cases, people have tried to call the dog as they looked directly at the dog and walked towards it, an action that is dominant and frightening to a dog that is in the "fight or flight" mode.

One of **the worst things that you can do is CALL a stray dog or panicked dog!** That's because if too many people have already tried to capture the dog, calling him becomes a "trigger" that can cause him to automatically take off in fear when anyone, including his owner, calls him. Instead, make some type of other noise like clearing your throat or fake a sneeze to alert the dog to your presence. Then look away, which is a submissive gesture. You can even fake like you're eating food on the-ground, and we suggest that you have a baggie of smelly treats like pieces of hotdog or liver treats. Sit down on the ground, or even lay flat on your back and pat your chest. Do anything other than staring straight at your dog while walking towards him! One of our volunteers captured a tiny terrier that ran from her when she called him but he came wiggling up to her once she laid flat on her back and patted her chest. Another of our volunteers captured a panicked dog by getting out of the car with a Frisbee and started tossed it back and forth with the dog owner as they both just ignored the dog. **WHEN YOU FIXATE ALL OF YOUR ATTENTION ON THE DOG AND THE DOG IS IN A FIGHT OR FLIGHT MODE, HE WILL-BECOME EVEN MORE TERRIFIED THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO CATCH HIM.** So work to get his attention and then do something with food, like pretend to eat and drop little bits behind you, to attract him to come to you.

You should know that when dogs are in a full fight or flight mode and their adrenaline is flowing, the olfactory section of their brain closes down. That's why sometimes when you try to feed a hotdog to a panicked dog it won't eat it. So sometimes the food will work, sometimes it won't. It depends on the dog and what level of panic he is in. Also, some dogs will immediately recognize their owner by their scent but other dogs won't.

One of THE most effective methods that Missing Pet Partnership has used to recover panicked dogs that run from their owner's is by the "LEAD TO FEED" method. This is where we use the giant, florescent poster boards (that you will be issued) to help generate leads. When someone calls you and says they believe they saw your dog, you should respond out there and see if you can find your dog. If your dog is not in the immediate area but you find a wooded area or someplace that the dog might return to, you set out a bucket of water and a plate of food (carry these in your car, along with a leash). You can also leave a blanket or towel with your scent on it (by rubbing it you will leave your scent on the towel) and/or your dog's scent. You can then rent or buy a digital wildlife camera and set it up so that you will see if your dog is taking the food. That way, when you come back the next day and the food is gone you can determine whether the food was eaten by wildlife or by your dog. From there, you can stake the location out or set a baited humane dog trap. Missing Pet Partnership successfully recovered a Bernese Mt. Dog named Sophie in 2008 that evaded capture for 7 weeks. This story is found on our website at www.missingpetpartnership.org and we HIGHLY recommend that you read it to learn more about panicked dog behaviors.

Finally, if you have a second dog who your missing dog is familiar and friendly with, take that dog with you but keep him on a long leash. If you come across your panicked lost dog, it is very possible that you can use your friendly happy dog to attract and capture the panicked dog by using him as a "magnet dog". Play with your leashed dog or simply walk around, ignoring your missing dog, and many times the lost dog will follow and you can find an opportunity to quietly and gently leash the loose dog. If you locate your dog but cannot catch him, call Missing Pet Partnership's Lost Pet Assistance line at **(253) 529-3999**. MPP has Lost Pet Consultants available to help you strategize how to locate your missing pet. If your dog is skittish, please read the handout titled, "How to Catch a Panicked Dog."

If you were helped by this information, please consider making a donation by going to www.missingpetpartnership.org and clicking on the "Donate" button, or by sending a check payable to "Missing Pet Partnership" at Missing Pet Partnership, P.O. Box 3085, Federal Way, WA 98063.