

MY DOG HAS RUN AWAY – WHAT CAN I DO?



First step: STAY WHERE YOU ARE

Stay at the spot where your dog ran off. Do not run after your dog, do not call out, and do not move too far away from where they ran off. The more you search around, the more scent you spread, making it harder for your dog to find their way back.

It can take hours for the dog to return to where it ran off, so make sure you're prepared:

Have food, drinks, warm clothing, a power bank, rain gear, etc. brought to the spot where the dog ran off. The car, which the dog is familiar with, can also be helpful for a long night, especially in the colder months.

Wait patiently, without walking around too much or shouting.

You can use the waiting time to notify the relevant authorities:

the police (several times due to shift changes), hunters/forest rangers, STMZ, animal shelters, vets, the city/local council, the building authority/animal carcass collection points, SBB, etc.

Create a flyer with STMZ, print plenty of copies (at least 200) and ask family, friends and acquaintances to distribute them. You'll find an example of a flyer on page 3. Again, the aim here is to avoid spreading the owner's scent everywhere, which is why you need helpers.

Place scent trails leading back home at the point where the dog went missing (see below).

If your dog returns to the place where it ran away, stay calm, make yourself small/crouch down, don't stare at it, try to calm yourself down, speak in a soft voice, and let it come to you.

Don't run towards it, don't call out loudly, and don't try to grab its collar or harness.

If there really is an urgent reason why you cannot wait for your dog at the place where it ran away, we can recommend several options:

Leave your car there with the side door or boot open and attach a flyer stating that the car is parked there for a dog that has run away. Provide your dog's spot with a blanket and some food. An additional wildlife camera (permit required) will show you whether your dog has been there or if other animals have passed by.

Set up a feeding station. You'll find instructions below

TRAIL A PATH HOME

With trailing a path home, you lay 'ordered' scent trails from all possible directions back to the spot where your dog went missing. The example image shows that the trail (yellow arrows) is always laid from the turning point back to the point where the dog went missing:

What can I use for the homing trail:

An item of clothing or bed linen worn by the primary carer. Tie this to a rope or lead and drag it behind you.

Fill a PET bottle or spray bottle with sausage or liver sausage brine. Drill small holes in the bottle cap and turn the bottle upside down on the way back so that the mixture can drip out. The diluted sausage scent is particularly suitable for dogs that have not yet formed a bond with their (new) owner ... and, of course, for those with a keen appetite.

Where not to use the 'trail' method: along busy roads, railway tracks, through tunnels ...



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POST (OR HAVE POSTED) FLYERS

Here is an example of a flyer. Important details include a good photo of your missing dog, your telephone number, and a request that any sightings be reported with photos or videos. Please note: Local authorities must be informed if you're putting up posters. Please also remember to take them down again.

Print the flyers in large quantities – at least 200 copies – in colour, and make them weatherproof using document sleeves and adhesive tape. Ask friends and acquaintances (so that your scent isn't spread everywhere) to put the flyers up in clearly visible and busy locations within a radius of at least 500 metres. It's best to put up several flyers side by side so that they catch the eye even more. Posting flyers on lampposts, Robidog bins, bridge railings, shops, entrance doors to residential complexes, car parks, footpaths and cycle paths, as well as distributing them through letterboxes, can quickly lead to sightings.

Do not include any details such as the colour of the collar or distinctive coat markings. This will help you to clarify in advance, should your dog be spotted, whether it really is your dog.

Post your flyer online as well. Facebook pages run by animal shelters, 'Missing & Found Animals' groups, town/local council pages, companies and tourism organisations have proved particularly helpful.

HOW DO I SET UP A FEEDING STATION?

Choose a quiet, sheltered, shaded and weatherproof spot that is easily accessible.

Stock the feeding station with wet food (it's fine if it smells). Feel free to serve it warm to intensify the smell. Of course, these treats will also attract other (wild) animals.

Position the wildlife camera about 4 to 5 metres away from the feeding station. This way, you'll also have a view of the immediate surroundings. Please ensure you obtain permission from the landowner or hunting leaseholder and make sure that data protection regulations are observed.

Always check and refill the feeding station at the same time each day, e.g. at 08:00 and 20:00. Consistency is very often the key to success.

It's best to put up a flyer about the feeding station to inform passers-by. A large stone smeared with liver sausage encourages your dog to linger and, as they lick it, helps reduce stress hormones.

This is also a helpful tip if your dog has run away from your own garden or if you haven't yet established a strong bond with your new four-legged family member.



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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CONTACT K-9 TIERSUCHE SCHWEIZ?

Contact us via the hotline and leave a message with your details and information about your missing dog. One of our advisers will call you back as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances with you, and together you'll work out an initial plan on how to get your lost dog back to you as quickly as possible. Your adviser will support you throughout this process free of charge.

K-9 Animal Search Switzerland Hotline

Postcodes 3xxx to 64xx: +41 77 535 88 24 or the contact form on our website

Postcodes 65xx to 9xxx: +41 76 457 36 22 or the contact form on our website

Postcodes 1xxx to 2xxx: Please get in touch with us via the contact form

WHEN CAN A SEARCH DOG BE DEPLOYED?

Depending on the situation, the adviser will recommend deploying a search dog in consultation with the dog handlers.

When is a search dog counterproductive?

If the missing dog is healthy, fit and mobile – i.e. has run off without a lead. A search dog would drive this dog further away and possibly force it to 'wander off'.

THE SEARCH DOG IS COMING – HOW DO I PREPARE

Scent samples must be prepared for the search teams. For example, take the dog's blanket from its basket and cut strips from it. These should be divided among several sterilised screw-top jars; the lids should be screwed on tightly, and all the jars packed together in a plastic bag and stored in a safe place in the house or flat. These jars are handed to the search dogs at the start of the operation. To prevent the search dogs from following the scent of a family member, all relatives and pets living in the household must be present ... as well as friends and acquaintances who have been near the scent sample – in our example, the dog's blanket – since the time the pet went missing, even if only for a very short time. IMPORTANT: Always proceed in consultation with the telephone adviser.

WHAT COSTS CAN I EXPECT WITH K-9 TIERSUCHE SCHWEIZ?

Advice from our members is free of charge.

For a search dog operation, we charge a one-off flat fee of CHF 150. This fee is a one-off payment and is independent of the number of search dog teams involved and whether further operations follow.

Our operational teams charge a mileage allowance for travel to and from the site. Your adviser will clarify these amounts in advance.

