

DOG 26

Protect your dog against theft



BLUE FOR
PETS
CROSS

The charity dedicated to helping sick, injured and homeless pets since 1897.



Protect your dog against theft

According to the Missing Pets Bureau as many as 38 per cent of all animals reported lost have actually been stolen and as many as 60 per cent of these are tragically never recovered.

In spite of these startling figures, many dogs are still left tied up outside shops, or in unattended vehicles where they are easily stolen. Once stolen, a dog can be moved many miles in a short space of time so prevention is vital.

Whilst pedigree pets are at the greatest risk due to the cost of purchasing pedigree puppies, non-pedigree dogs can also be at risk as thieves wait for a reward to be offered.

Keeping your dog safe

- Think twice before leaving your dog tied up outside a shop. You will make them a vulnerable and tempting target for opportunist thieves.
- Don't leave your dog alone in the car, even for a few minutes. Thieves can easily break into your car to steal your precious pet.
- Make sure your dog is microchipped and that you keep your contact details up-to-date, especially if you move house or change your telephone number.

- Your dog should always wear a collar and ID tag with your name and address on it. This is a legal requirement when your dog is in a public place. Avoid putting your dog's name on the disc.
- Take clear photographs of your dog from various angles, and update them regularly. Make a note of any distinguishing features.
- Have lots of photographs of yourself with your dog, to help you to prove ownership if needed.
- Train your dog to come back when called, and never let him off the lead if you are not sure he will come back to you. If in doubt, use an extending lead, especially if you are in an unfamiliar area where your dog may get lost more easily.





- Take care when choosing someone to care for your dog if you are going away from home or need a dog walker whilst you go to work. Use a reputable company or boarding kennels and check references for people who provide dog or house-sitting services.
- Beware of strangers asking you questions about your dog.
- Vary your times of walks and routes; some dogs are actually targeted and snatched during walks.
- At home, make sure your garden is secure and fit a bell to the gate so you hear if anyone opens it.
- Keep your dog in view in the garden, don't just leave him outside unsupervised.
- If you breed puppies for sale, take great care when inviting people in to view; ideally have someone else present and limit the numbers of people you allow in at a time. Show the puppies in one secure area.
- Decide who owns the dog in your household. Discuss who would own the dog in the event of bereavement or break up and draw up documentation to this effect. This may seem unnecessary, but pets can become the centre of ownership disputes in these circumstances.

If the worst happens

- If your dog is lost or suspected stolen, it is important to act quickly.
- Report the loss to your local council's Dog Warden and those in all other neighbouring local authorities.
- Visit places where dog walkers go such as local parks and public places and talk to people, asking them to keep an eye open for your dog.
- If you believe your pet has been stolen, report it to the police and insist it is recorded as a theft and not a lost animal.
- Report the loss/theft to the microchip database, this will ensure that if anyone tries to re-register the chip number, you will be informed.



- Make posters and display them in areas local to your home and also in relevant places such as vets, local parks etc. The poster should include a clear photograph and details of the circumstances.
- Make sure local vets are aware in case someone takes your dog in for treatment.
- Report the loss on as many as possible of the missing animals websites – there is no single national missing animals database, so you will have to place the same information on all of them to ensure a widespread appeal.
- Contact local animal shelters and rescue charities and send them posters to display.

Losing a pet due to theft or other reasons is a traumatic event. Blue Cross operates the national Pet Bereavement Support Service which can be contacted on 0800 096 6606 (8:30am – 8:30pm) or by email: pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk



Happy, healthy pets

Blue Cross advice leaflets are packed full of top tips to help owners with their pet questions. They cover a wide range of topics, from training a puppy to caring for an older cat. So if you need some support to help you with a pet problem, whether it's about a dog or a degu, we're here for you.

You can read and download our leaflets online at www.bluecross.org.uk

Visit our website to take advantage of all its features, including:

- blog posts from Blue Cross experts
- latest news
- events near you
- pets needing new homes

Or you can join in the chat on our online communities:

 www.facebook.com/thebluecrossuk

 www.twitter.com/the_blue_cross

Blue Cross

Blue Cross has been dedicated to the health and happiness of pets since 1897. Abandoned or unwanted, ill or injured – we do what's needed to give every pet a healthy life in a happy home. We're a charity, so the more help you give us, the more help we can give pets.

How you can help

Blue Cross doesn't receive any government funding, so we rely on the generosity of pet lovers like you. There are lots of ways you can help the sick, injured and abandoned pets in our care, like making a donation, fundraising for us or leaving us a legacy.

Please call us on 0300 777 1897 or visit www.bluecross.org.uk



Blue Cross head office
Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF

Telephone: 0300 777 1897

Fax: 0300 777 1601

Email: info@bluecross.org.uk

www.bluecross.org.uk



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