

Found a Lost Pet?

Found a Dog?

1. Be Safe

If you are able to, get the dog to a safe and secure area. Be aware of your surroundings. Your safety and the safety of others should come first. DO NOT RUN, OR CHASE THE DOG INTO TRAFFIC.

2. Check for Identification

Check to see if the dog is wearing a collar, and if so, is there an ID tag or county license tag attached. Sometimes people write telephone numbers directly on the collar, instead of attaching a tag.

3. Knock on Doors

Check with your neighbors and other people who live near you. They may know the dog and can help you locate its home.

4. Snap Photos

Take photos of the dog, street signs, and the general area where the dog was found.

5. File a Found Pet Report

Call the Hernando County Sheriff's Office at 352-754-6830 to report a found pet.

6. Check for Microchip

Take the dog to a local vet's office or the Animal Shelter/Adoption Center so it can be scanned for a microchip. If the dog has a chip, this may be the fastest and best way to find an owner. If needed, HCSO-AS can help with this process.

7. Post on Social Media

Post the photos of the dog, along with photos with photos of the location where the dog was located on social media sites (Facebook, Nextdoor, Lost/Found Pet Sites). Post a photo of the dog on lost.petcolove.org.

8. Make and Post Flyers

Hand flyers in heavy-traffic areas and public places near where the dog was found. Good, old-fashioned leg work is still the best way to locate an owner.

9. Can You Keep and Foster the Dog?

Take the dog home for safekeeping. Keeping a found pet at home helps keep our pet population lower and prevents the pet from being housed in a high-stress environment and exposed to disease. HCSO-AS can provide vaccines for found pets if you are willing to take them home with you. Keep the dog separated from children and other pets.

10. If You Cannot Locate Owner and Cannot Keep

If you are unable to house the dog safely, you can call the animal shelter to make an appointment (352-796-5062) to bring it in. Our team may have some other options for the pet that do not require coming to the shelter.

Found a Cat?

Most cats you see outdoors are NOT in need of intervention and should be left where they are. So, first determine whether this is a cat in need of immediate attention (sick or injured) or a healthy neighborhood cat out for a stroll.

Signs That a Cat is Sick or Injured Include the Following:

- How is the cat injured? Is it able to walk on four legs? Is it bleeding, etc.?
- Is the cat wearing a collar?
- Are the cat's eyes clear?
- Does the cat appear to be underfed?
- Is the cat's breathing slow and labored?
- Is the cat hunched up, possibly in pain?
- Is the cat's coat dirty or missing patches of fur?
- Is the cat declawed?

If You Believe This is a Lost or Abandoned Cat:

- Take a photo of the cat. Try to get a full-body side view and the face, preferably standing, so you have a clear image of the cat and its markings. Post the photo on social media sites (Facebook, Nextdoor, Lost/Found Pet Sites) and at nearby intersections. More cats are reunited as a result of good posters and flyers, than as a result of social media, so get those posters up while the cat is still around and visible.
- Get the cat scanned for a microchip at any vet, animal shelter, or pet store. This is a free service and no appointment is needed. If you are unable to transport the cat, call the HCSO at 352-754-6830, and request to have an animal enforcement officer respond to check for a microchip.
- If the cat is in danger and urgent action is necessary, bring or lure the cat into your garage or home to keep it safe, if you are able to do so safely. Otherwise, request assistance from HCSO-AS. The cat should be placed in an area that is dark, and quiet, a separate room away from children and other pets. Place food, water, and a litter box in the immediate area of the cat.
- Once the danger is gone, return the cat to the location it was found.
- If the cat is not in danger, sick, or injured, do not bring the cat indoors. Leave the cat in place, or return it to the exact location you originally found it, so it can return home on its own. You may provide food, water, support.
- Post the found cat alert on PetHarbor.com, HelpingLostPets.com, Pawboost.com, lost.petcolove.org.
- If you find kittens, please visit - <https://www.cityofrochester.gov/departments/department-recreation-and-human-services/what-do-if-you-find-stray-kittens?id=8589969445>

