

## **Pet Theft: Keeping Your Pet Safe**

Every day, pets are taken from yards and cars and used for profit, dog fighting or biomedical research. Dogs and cats who are in “free to a good home” ads are primary candidates for research. Follow these tips to avoid your pet finding a similar fate to the millions of animals who have already been taken from their homes:

To Protect your Pet:

Watch your pet when he is outdoors. Fences provide a false sense of security, but even though they may keep your pet in, they do not stop humans from entering your yard. Electric fences and border training offer no protection at all. Your pet has the best protection when he’s on a leash. Some may say their dog would not be taken hostage, but a medicated meatball or a kind word may be all it takes to lure a dog into a car.



Make sure your pet has proper identification at all times. Dogs and cats should wear a collar with identification, and every dog and cat should be micro-chipped or tattooed on her thigh.

Spay or neuter your animals. Medical laboratories often will not accept animals that have been altered. Altering also prevents unwanted pregnancies, reduces behavior and health problems, and helps combat the companion animal overpopulation problem.

When returning a stray animal to his owner, request proof of ownership, including photos of the animal, vet records, and licensing papers.

If you’ve lost a pet, posting that he or she needs medical attention on the lost flyer can deter somebody who may be inclined to keep your pet.

Utilizing a dog door when you’re not home create a great risk for your pet. Always ask yourself, “Would I leave \$10,000 on my picnic table?” or even better, “Would I leave my toddler unattended while I’m away?” By using a dog door, you’re allowing a “toddler” to have free will into dangerous territory, even if it may only be your backyard.

When Rehoming your Pet:

Never give away any animal for free. Dogs can be given to laboratories, and kittens are often used as bait for dog fighting. Even a \$25 rehoming fee may deter those looking to harm the animal. Require personal and vet references before giving a pet up to a new home. Also, take the animal to his new home – don’t meet the potential adopter somewhere else.

Finally, if you see any suspicious activity, alert your neighbors and the police.

Following these simple tips will save you and your pet much pain and grief. Spread the word about pet theft by distributing literature or organizing a lecture.

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