

FLIGHT RISKS & PREVENTING RUNAWAY DOGS

A flight risk dog is a dog who has been observed to have an increased risk of pulling out of collars/harnesses and/or darting away. Dogs like this often try to flee when spooked and if they get out of their gear and escape, it can be extremely dangerous for them, and difficult to find them again. Read through this handout to help prevent your dog from escape, and for information on what to do if the unfortunate situation does happen.

WHAT TRIGGERS FLIGHT?

Flight behavior in dogs can be a response to a number of emotions/circumstances, including fear, anxiety, frustration, boredom, or under-socialization. Certain environments and situations, such as...

- 🐾 Loud Noises
- 🐾 Quick Movements
- 🐾 Fireworks and Thunderstorms
- 🐾 Large Crowds
- 🐾 New People and New Surroundings
- 🐾 Changed Routines

...can all act as triggers for flight risk dogs and increase their risk of escaping, darting, and hiding due to the stress and fear they can cause. When flight risk dogs escape, they typically avoid approaching people and instead will hide or run away, making them very difficult to catch once they have escaped.

WHAT CAN I DO? SAFETY PRECAUTIONS 🐾

ALWAYS KEEP YOUR DOG IN LEASH WHEN OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOME, INCLUDING FENCED-IN YARDS: Flight risk dogs can flee when you least expect it and can often get around fencing. Keep them on leash at all times when they will be stepping foot outside the safety of the home.

ALWAYS USE 2 POINTS OF ATTACHMENT FOR LEASHES WHILE OUTSIDE: Example: One leash attached to a well-fitted harness, and a second leash attached to a well-fitted collar, ideally a martingale-style collar. This prevents escape if the dog slips out of either the harness or collar, or one leash fails.

MAKE SURE YOUR DOG IS ALWAYS WEARING HIS OR HER COLLAR WITH IDENTIFYING TAGS ATTACHED, EVEN WHEN IN YOUR HOME: Accidents happen and dogs can escape when you least expect it. Make sure your dog is always wearing identifying tags, so that in case of escape, they may be more easily identified.

EXERCISING EXTRA CAUTION WHEN OPENING DOORS TO UNSECURED AREAS OF YOUR HOME: Such as an unfenced front yard, through means such as a baby gate or use of a well-fitted harness.

UTILIZING AN AIR TAG OR OTHER GPS TRACKING DEVICE WORN AT ALL TIMES ON THE DOG'S COLLAR: This will help for easier locating of the dog if he or she does escape your home.

WHAT ABOUT MICROCHIPS? WON'T THEY TRACK MY LOST DOG?

- 🐾 A microchip is **NOT** a GPS tracker. A microchip contains a unique number that, when entered into a database that checks microchips, is able to pull information about where this dog and microchip were last registered and often, from which rescue they came from. However, in order to check a microchip, the microchip needs to be scanned by a handheld device at the time someone has found your dog.
- 🐾 A microchip will help animal rescue or control authorities contact you if your dog is found and returned to the shelter system, but it will **NOT** help you locate your dog in the event that they run away and are not found by an animal rescue or control authority.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY DOG ESCAPES?

- 🐾 If your dog does escape, do all that you can to alert your community right away. Make sure to include the following information:
 - A description of your dog including size, color, approximate age, and anything else noteworthy
 - The date, time, and location that your dog went missing
 - Your dog's name
 - Your contact information
- 🐾 The best places to start contacting are:
 - The rescue you adopted from as well as other local rescues in the area
 - The police precinct in the area that your dog escaped
 - Veterinarian offices in the area that your dog escaped
 - Your microchip company if you have registered for extra protections in case of escape
- 🐾 Make a poster or flyer with a clear photo of your dog, and include the above information as well as a contact phone number. Canvass the area your dog went missing and hang the flyers, pass them out to local businesses, rescues, veterinarian offices, and at houses nearby to encourage people to check their doorbell cameras.
- 🐾 Post all of the pertinent information on social media, neighborhood apps, and on Facebook groups for lost pets.
- 🐾 Consider contacting a professional tracker to help locate your lost dog.