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TIPS ON LOSS PREVENTION
AND HELP TO REUNITE GUARDIANS WITH LOST CATS

Losing a pet is a traumatic experience for you, your family and your cat. The following are some tips for finding your lost cat.

Well over 90% of lost cats vanish at night. Many are not spayed or neutered. Most are between 1 and 2 years old and only 1 in 5 had some form of identification. Less than 4% of cats taken to SPCA shelters are returned to their owners. Thousands of cats go missing every year in the Lower Mainland area - many to fall victim to coyotes.

LOSS PREVENTION:

• Have your cat spayed or neutered - neutered cats wander less.

• Protect your cat by keeping it indoors. Research information on outdoor cat enclosures including patios and balconies.

• Have your cat wear identification in the form of a tattoo or an ID collar even if it's an indoor cat. Micro-chipping is also a possibility but less visible.

• Contact the vet where this operation was done. Make sure that contact information connected to the cat's tattoo is current and the collar ID is up-to-date and readable.

• Never transport a cat without putting it in a secure carrier. Many are lost after jumping out of car windows or a guardian's arms.

IF YOU HAVE LOST A CAT:

• Place a "Lost" ad in your local newspaper the very first morning that your pet is gone. These ads may be free. If necessary maintain this ad for up to 3 months.

• Put up posters in as many public places you can think of. Be sure the posters include a quality photo of your pet, its name, description, date and location it went missing and a 24-hour contact number. Make dozens of posters with the same information as above, enlist family and friends and go to every home, in every direction, and give or put a poster in mailboxes, under doors or on windshields.

• Put a large "Lost" sign in your front yard.

- Visit local animal shelters *daily* if possible – Don't just phone! Be sure to check the isolation areas at all shelters including the SPCA.

- Go to www.carescatshelter.com and download "Lost/Missing Cat Report".

- Check animal hospitals and veterinary clinics including those outside your area.

- Walk or drive through your neighbourhood several times a day, especially early in the morning and at dusk calling them by name

- Ask neighbours, letter carriers, joggers, garbage collectors, newspaper carriers and others to look out for your pet. Cats tend not to wander very far unless taken or chased, so these people may have seen your lost feline and not known it was lost.

- Pay attention to construction sites, vacant buildings, old cars and dumpsters (particularly with lids.)

- If you have one, call your municipal pound as they sometimes pick up stray, dead or injured animals.

- Place a recently worn piece of clothing outside to attract your pet. If you have a blind or indoor cat, place its litter box outside or spread a fine trail of litter in 4 directions from your house to help it find its way home.

- If you have recently moved, be sure to notify old neighbours in case the cat returns there. Leave them your new number. If the ID tag has an old phone number on it, call whoever has that number now and have them pass calls on to you.

- Consider offering a reward for your pet's safe return, but beware of callers who demand you send them money first

- Visit websites dedicated to helping lost and found animals return home. These include the vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca – resources – cat find, spca.bc.ca, petfinder.com or petlynx.net.

- Even the friendliest of pets can become terrified and wild. You may need to rent or purchase a humane live trap and set it to capture a terrified lost cat.

- If you think that your pet has been stolen, call the police.

- Finally, don't give up. Pets have returned home sometimes months after they disappeared

Our thanks to Cat Find (Vancouver Humane Society), the BCSPCA and Petfinder for providing portions of this information. For further details please check their various websites.