

Search and Detective Services

Pet detectives can help you find your lost cat. Learn about three such services.

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If your cat becomes lost and you don't have the time or resources to conduct a full search, where can you turn? Steven Cohen, owner of FIND R PET, also started a company in Los Angeles called Pet Detective (unrelated to the Pet Detectives registry). For \$250, he will post lost notices in a three-block area, use a reverse directory to contact neighbors in a three-block area and call all primary shelters for a week.

Mountain Wilderness Search Dogs has a 24-hour lost-and-found pet hotline and specializes in finding missing pets and people. A nonprofit, all-volunteer search-and-rescue agency, the organization exists solely on donations and charges no fees for its services.

To find a lost cat, such agencies need several items from the owner, according to Harry E. Oakes Jr. of Mountain Wilderness Search Dogs. "Each cat owner should keep good photographs from all angles of the cat." A written, up-to-date description of the cat should include its name, age, weight, height, sex, any surgeries, length of tail and overall length, eye color, fur color and length, collar color and type or any other form of ID, Oakes added. The owner should also have a record of the cat's shots, health status, birthmarks, scars, tattoo and microchip location, if any.

"Each cat owner should keep a good sample of the cat's hair, collected in a clean dry envelope and kept completely away from cigarette smoke," Oakes said. Obviously, you need to have all these items in place before your cat ever becomes lost.