

PROTECT *your* POOCH



Dog owners are increasingly concerned about their dogs being stolen, so we are urging the public to keep their dogs SECURE, IN SIGHT and SEARCHABLE.

Keep them **SECURE**

- 🐾 **Pets can be easily stolen from a garden when left unattended, even for a few minutes. Front gardens are very vulnerable.**
- 🐾 **Secure your garden boundary to prevent your dog from escaping or a thief from reaching in. Fit a bell or gate alarm to rear or side gates and secure them with British Standard locks, locking bolts or closed shackle padlocks.**
- 🐾 **As well as a lock, consider fitting a bell or small alarm to outside kennels to warn you of any tampering.**
- 🐾 **Be particularly careful of publicly posting on social media details of where you live, the type of dog you have and where you walk.**

Keep them **SEARCHABLE**

- 🐾 **Make sure your dog is microchipped and the details are correct on any of the recognised pet registration databases. Your dog must be microchipped by the time it is eight weeks old. For further information about the process and potential databases visit the [UK government webpage on microchipping your dog](#).**
- 🐾 **Fit your dog with a collar - the tag on the collar should have a contact number and your surname, not the name of the dog.**
- 🐾 **Make sure you take pictures of your dog from various angles, especially any distinctive markings or features. A photo of you with your dog can help to prove ownership. Taking photos of your dog in various conditions can also help, such as after grooming and before.**

Keep them **IN SIGHT**

- 🐾 **Never leave your dog unattended in a car – especially on warm days. It's not just dangerous for their health but allows them to be easily targeted by thieves.**
- 🐾 **Leaving your dog alone outside a shop is another easy opportunity for a thief, even if you are only away for a minute.**
- 🐾 **Teach your dog recall. If it's not trained to do this, be very careful of allowing them off the lead, especially in unfamiliar areas. You could try an extending lead instead..**
- 🐾 **Vary the times and routes you take when walking your dog.**
- 🐾 **Be careful of strangers asking a lot of questions when you are walking your dog – they could be distracting you to make it easy to steal your dog.**
- 🐾 **If you need to use a dog walking service or kennels, make sure you check references carefully to ensure the offer is genuine or the company is trusted.**



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170%

DOGLOST, A UK CHARITY THAT HELPS VICTIMS OF DOG THEFT, recorded a 170% increase in the crime, from 172 dogs reported stolen in 2019 to 465 dogs in 2020.

CAMPAIGNING FOR A CHANGE IN THE LAW

At present, dog theft is not defined as a specific crime, with dogs classed as 'property' under the Theft Act 1968.

If caught, the penalty for stealing pets is generally a small fine or suspended sentence, with the **Pet Theft Reform** campaign reporting that in recent years **only 1% of dog theft crimes have led to a prosecution.** Currently many police forces are unable to distinguish between theft of a dog and theft of other property therefore the true extent of dog theft cannot be understood.

? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

🐾 You can support petitions to make dog theft a specific criminal offence. To know what petitions are currently running visit: <https://petition.parliament.uk>

🐾 You could write to your parliamentary representative lending your support and letting them know how they can help. **The Kennel Club** has a pet theft template letter to get you started. Visit: www.thekennelclub.org.uk/about-us/campaigns/dog-thefts

🐾 You could raise awareness about the issue by displaying our campaign poster in your community. By letting others know about the issue we have more opportunity to keep dogs safe across the country.



79%

of people said they had grown more fearful of taking their dog for a walk during the day and an even greater number, 83%, have grown more fearful of taking their dog for a walk at night.

According to a survey conducted by Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne in partnership with the Association of police and Crime Commissioners,

27,440

PEOPLE (22% of the 124,729 people who responded) have had a dog stolen or knew someone who had over the last year.

Watch our

DOG THEFT WEBINAR

Hosted by **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH** with speakers from the **Met Police** and **Crimestoppers**, and special guest speakers Katy Bourne, **PCC for Sussex** and Dr Daniel Allen, founder of the **Pet Theft Reform** campaign. ourwatch.org.uk/webinars









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What to do...

IF THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS AND YOUR DOG IS STOLEN

There are a number of things you should do if your dog is stolen, all of which will increase your chances of recovering it.

-  **1** Contact the [Police](#) and report your dog as stolen, providing as many descriptive details as you can. Make a note of the crime reference number.
-  **2** Contact your [local council](#) to make them aware, as many still have dog warden services that encounter stray dogs.
-  **3** Contact the [microchip database](#) holding your dog's details and update them about the theft. Should the dog be recovered and checked, it will be possible to reunite you.
-  **4** There are many [websites for missing animals](#), so make sure you add details of your dog's loss to these, using the photos you have taken. Include the crime reference number.
-  **5** **Vets are also a good place to advertise** the loss of any dog, as well as local animal rescue centres.
-  **6** **Noticeboards in local parks** may also allow you to place missing dog details.

PUPPY FARMING



In addition to dog theft, puppy smuggling and illegal breeding through puppy farming is on the rise.

During the pandemic, demand for puppies has been so high that buyers are looking further afield for puppies and dogs, and sellers are willing to take more of a risk for more profits.

To find out more about puppy farming visit: [Crimestoppers Dog Theft page](#)

If you have information about those behind organised dog theft, puppy smuggling or illegal breeding and wish to remain anonymous, you can contact the independent charity **Crimestoppers by phone on 0800 555 111 or [online](#) - you'll stay 100% anonymous. Always.**

Neighbourhood Watch is the largest crime prevention charity in England and Wales. There are many ways in which you can get involved with the movement, from joining a local scheme to supporting a national campaign or community project.

Find out more: ourwatch.org.uk



BE AWARE OF SCAMMERS MASQUERADING AS PET THIEVES

Please be aware of scammers who **see the missing dog posters** and use this information to contact the owners and offer to return the dog for money - but never had the dog in the first place. Owners could be at risk of losing not only their pet but their money too.

If anyone demands money for the safe return of your pet contact the police.





PROTECT YOUR POOCH

Dog theft is on the rise and we are urging the public to keep their dogs **SECURE**, **IN SIGHT** and **SEARCHABLE**, and to help make pet theft a **SPECIFIC OFFENCE**.

Keep them:

- 1. SECURE** (pets are easily stolen from unsecured gardens if left unattended)
- 2. IN SIGHT** (when out and about keep them close and practice good recall)
- 3. SEARCHABLE** (to support quicker recovery if they go missing keep them microchipped, tagged and up to date photos)

**AND HELP MAKE PET THEFT
A SPECIFIC OFFENCE**

**Find out more on all of the
above and more at
ourwatch.org.uk/ProtectYourPooch**

