

What to do if your cat gets out (or you think they might have):

- Complete VOKRA's Escaped Cat form at this link: <https://form.jotform.com/81257571184258> - VOKRA's Escaped Cats Coordinator will record your cat's photo and information and compare it with new cats that come in.
- Make sure your cat's tattoo or microchip is registered with your current contact information: call the vet that fixed them and register them on the SPCA BC provincial pet registry <https://www.bcpetregistry.ca/PetIdentification>
- Email escapedcats@vokra.ca to borrow a trap if needed.

Begin searching right away! ...DO NOT wait and hope that your cat will come back

1. Make sure the cat is not in the house - Cats can hide in remarkable places!

- Look in every cupboard, closet, under the beds and in box spring linings (feel around for lump), sofas, chairs, inside undersides of furniture, in drawers and behind the back of drawers. Look behind the fridge/stove/dishwasher and washer/dryer. Check for holes in the walls and access into the ceiling. Even 2 or 3 inch spaces behind or under furniture or cabinets can be hiding spots for a scared cat!
- Call their name, shake a bag of treats, and listen for them.
- If the cat may be scared and hiding, leave 10-15 pieces of kibble near suspected hiding spots to see if the cat is coming out when you aren't around, preferably with a bit of flour sprinkled on the ground around the kibble - so that you can tell from the pawprints whether the cat has visited the food.

2. Leave a window or door open for the cat to get back in (if/when possible, and ONLY if you are certain the cat is outside)

- Close any other pets securely in a separate room
- Sprinkle flour across the threshold so that you can tell from the pawprints whether the cat is back inside. If you see prints, close the door BEFORE checking all your cat's favourite hiding places.
- If the cat is relatively new to your home and may not be sure how to get back, put lines of used kitty litter on the ground in a spoke pattern leading to an open door or window and an article of your smelly clothing like a worn sock.

3. Go searching RIGHT AWAY, and then again in the evening when it is quieter.

- Walk around the neighbourhood, shaking treats and softly calling the cat's name
- Take a flashlight to shine under bushes, cars, etc – to help you see their eyes.

4. Search close to home - cats are most often found very close by. Cats often put great effort into escaping, but quickly get scared and hide once outside.

- Stay tight to your block, across the street and across the lane.
- After 24 hours, expand your search to a 4-5 block radius

5. Ask your neighbours for permission to look in their yards.

- Ask them to open their garages or sheds. Sometimes cats run in when the door is open, and then people unknowingly lock the door with the cat stuck inside.

6. Get posters printed and put up ASAP - Helping Lost Pets BC provides free posters:

<http://www.helpinglostpets.com/v2/ ...>

- Include a photo (colour is best), cats' name, where & when lost (date & cross streets), brief identifying description, including any distinctive features. Provide a phone number where you can be reached 24/7
- Specify on the poster that people should call you, and NOT to approach the cat- this could scare them farther away...
- Post them at the front of your house and the corners of every block within a two block radius, protected from the elements in plastic sleeves (open end down)
- Let all your neighbours know. Take the poster with you when you go talk to neighbours.

List your cat on lost pet sites:

- **Helping Lost Pets BC** - <http://www.helpinglostpets.com>
- **BC SPCA** - <http://bcspcapets.shelterbuddy.com>
- **Pawboost** - <https://www.pawboost.com/>
- **Craigslist**
- Email all the cat's info and photo to **Missing Pets in BC** - missingpetsinbc@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/MissingPetsInBc/>

And share among your Facebook network - ask people to repost

- Spreading the word will help get everyone in your neighbourhood looking!

ADDITIONAL TIPS:**Don't depend on other people to find your cat for you, or for it to wander home.**

- You have to get out there and search yourself. Get help from friends, family, roommates: to cover more territory faster... but avoid large, noisy search parties! 4 people max at a time, and make sure everyone knows to call you rather than approaching or chasing the cat.
- The first 48 hours are critical, so take time off work if you have to. If you don't find your cat quickly, the search can take hundreds of hours later, so consider this time spent as an investment.
- Look for crawl spaces, garages, sheds, under decks and balconies and any sheltered spot with a space 4-5" high. Take note of likely hiding places and return to them repeatedly. (We had searched the spot where a recent escapee was hiding a few times. It was only by revisiting it often that we finally spotted her)

Search mostly after dark and at dawn... especially if you have limited time.

- 11:00 PM through 2:00 AM is prime time for lost cats to come out.
- Use daylight hours for finding likely hiding spots, getting familiar with what looks safe to a cat, posting, and for talking to neighbours.

Leave a dish of water and dry food out near your building and change it once a day, UNLESS THERE IS A TRAP THERE. Once a trap is in place do NOT leave any other food out.

- If you can, leave its litter box outside along with an unwashed article of your clothing, or sprinkle some litter discreetly around your property.

Follow up on every lead to see if the cat the person called you about is your cat.

- Start by hanging around where the cat was seen, and asking neighbours if they know if a cat meeting the description lives there. This is the “process of elimination”: if the cat described lives there, it’s not your cat, but if you can find nothing about it or cannot find it yourself, include the location on your list of search places.
- After awhile, you’ll know which cats belong where, and you won’t have to go out on every call, because you’ll know by experience when the cat is probably not yours.

Even the friendliest cat will be wary after a few days outdoors and may not respond to you at all... It has learned that silence keeps it safe.

- A humane trap baited with tempting food is the quickest, easiest and safest way to capture it. Once set, stay close by and monitor the trap at least every 2 hours. Attach a copy of your lost cat poster to the trap.
- Notify your neighbours who may have outdoor cats, and ask them to keep their cats indoors while the trap is set.
- Once you locate your cat’s hiding place, arrange to get access to the property or space through its owner or tenant. We may have to move the trap into that yard.
- If the cat is not responding to you, DO NOT approach! Better to wait for a trap than chase the kitty further from their familiar territory.

Once a TRAP is set, stay close by and monitor the trap at least every 2 hours.

- A cat or wild animal will be distressed in a trap and can get dehydrated quickly. It is not safe to leave them in a trap for too long, especially in very hot or cold weather.
- If you trap a skunk or raccoon or someone else’s cat you must CALL US IMMEDIATELY, and we will instruct you how to let the animal out of the trap.