

On the Positive Side: Take the precaution of microchipping your pets

by **FRANK BRYCE**

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Due to Independence Day holiday falling this past Monday, this message may seem a bit late. The ASPCA established "July 1st ID Your Pet Day" in preparation of the problems of pets frightened by fireworks as part of the holiday celebration. The following positive information fits if your pet is missing or may go missing due to fireworks, thunderstorms, improperly opened doors or gates and just simple hard-wired little and large imps who dig out, jump fences or otherwise go roaming.

The ASPCA sets forth three relatively simple tips to observe during the holidays and actually year-round. First, comply with the pets being fitted with their rabies tag and add a personalized collar identification that includes your name, phone number and address. Secondly implant a microchip. This is a security measure that almost guarantees the pet comes home from animal control, shelter or good Samaritan situation. And lastly, download the ASPCA Pet Safety App which provides general instructions on how to search for lost pets.

The PetHub (Cattipper, June 29 by Grace Sydney) offers an expanded list of a few steps to take dealing with missing pets or the prevention of them going missing. Their first step is for you to maintain your pet's medical records and proof of ownership. When you find the pet, wherever that may be, you can provide proof of ownership and the shelter, animal control or good Samaritan can responsibly release the pet back to you.

The need is stressed for an ID tag, rabies tag, and in Doña Ana County and city of Las Cruces there is a requirement for a city or county license tag and a microchip. The county and city animal control trucks are equipped with universal scanners to read the microchips in the field and allow the pet to be returned to its home from the trucks if contact can be made with the pet owner. If the pet is for some reason not scanned in the field, turns up at the shelter or is held by a good Samaritan, the shelter, veterinary clinics and many rescue groups now have scanners available.

Securing the areas to prevent pets from taking a walk on their own will help thwart misadventures away from home. Keeping cats indoors and putting up fencing that the pet cannot jump over or dig under is the best way to corral them. When transporting pets, there is the opportunity for these furry critters to find a weak spot in a leash or an improperly fastened crate door to pop open. The collar or harness must be fitted to prevent them from slipping out or simply breaking a light weight leash. Coupled with appropriate training and socialization, these all contribute to a safer environment for your pet and family.

If the pet does disappear, the first thing to do is call the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley at 575-382-0018 and file a lost pet report. The pet owner can ask that the shelter staff check the "found pet" reports to see if the pet has been reported by a good Samaritan. Visiting the shelter should be done immediately and regularly to see if the pet has been brought to the shelter regardless of possible identification the pet may be wearing. Posting fliers in appropriate places to alert others about the pet and contacting the many rescue groups to be on the lookout for the pets are other steps you can take. There continues to be improvement in the ways that pets are returned to owners but prevention and identification are the very best way to protect your pet during holidays and every day.

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