

HOW TO KEEP YOUR PETS FROM BEING STOLEN OR LOST



The incidents of pet theft and pets going missing is unfortunately very prevalent in Bahrain, especially with pedigree or unique looking animals. Hundreds of pets have gone missing since the Lost Pets Facebook site was created in November 2012 - never to be seen again. It is also said there are pet theft rings operating in many areas. Some people like to let their pets run free (dogs and cats) - but there are just too many hazards. Your pet could be:

- sold for profit
- used for breeding
- used as bait for dog fights
- abused by people
- subjected to traffic accidents
- locked in closed outbuildings
- rehomed or taken to shelters
- in territorial animal fights
- innocently or purposely poisoned

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE:

PADLOCK YOUR GATES AND CHECK FENCING – Make sure you have locks on your gates and that gardeners and other service personnel know the importance of keeping the gates locked and secured. "Gate left open" is by far the biggest reported cause for pets going missing. Keep your pets in a safe area when there is work being done on your premises (perhaps in a locked room). Check boundary fences/walls and make sure there are no places to escape. Leave your pets indoors when you are not home.

HAVE YOUR PETS SPAYED/NEUTERED – Not only because of the health benefits for your pet, but it will eliminate any resale value for breeding purposes. Studies have also shown that sterilised animals are less likely to roam. If a stranger approaches you about buying or breeding your pet, tell him the pet has been spayed/neutered, even if it has not.

MICRO-CHIP – Make sure your pets are micro-chipped. It won't help locate your pet (not a GPS device), but if it is found and you need to prove the pet is yours, you have the documentation. Make sure you register the information with your vet and keep your contact information up-to-date. The Cat Society of Bahrain and Pet Animals (CSBPA) has a National Registry (information can be found at www.csbpa/reg.php). If your pet has been re-chipped, be sure to record both old and new numbers (sometimes both will show up in the scan). Keep this information in a secured place in your home for quick and easy access.

In order for the micro-chip to be identified in your new country, you will need to re-register there. Remember if you are checking a 'found' pet and find it has been micro-chipped, you will need to check with ALL the vets/sources to see who it may be registered with.

COLLAR AND TAG – Make sure your pet is wearing a collar and I.D. tag that includes your name and phone number. I.D. tags are inexpensive and can be purchased from any local pet shop. Some recommend the tag also says "neutered/micro-chipped" to discourage pet theft. Avoid putting your pet's name on the disc/collar as that can make it easy for thieves to lure your pet away.

LEASH YOUR PET WHEN OUTSIDE – Keep them in your view at all times. It only takes a minute for a dog to be snatched. Never leave your dog tied outside a store or unattended in the car, even if it's locked or the windows are rolled down. Vary your times of walks and routes as some dogs are actually targeted and snatched during walks.

DON'T BUY STOLEN PETS – Don't buy pets from the markets, roadside stalls or dodgy pet shops. There is simply no way to verify if you are purchasing someone's stolen pet, in addition to encouraging continued sales of pets.

CURRENT PHOTOS – Be sure to have current photos of your pet, so in the unfortunate case they go missing, you can show their current appearance. Photos taken with family members will also prove they belong to you. Remember any special markings (scars/spots/labouring so you can identify).

MEDICAL RECORDS – Keep all vet records and pet passports, so you can not only prove ownership, but show you have taken care of your pet.

INFORM COMPOUND/APARTMENT STAFF – Make sure the staff on your compound know that they should call you if they see your pet going walk about. Some people even give a photo to their security personnel that includes their apartment/villa number and phone.

TRAIN YOUR DOG TO 'COME' – Train your dog to come back when called.

CHOOSING SOMEONE TO CARE FOR YOUR PET – Take care when choosing someone to care for your pet while you go away. Make sure any house help is trained to your standards and requirements. Use a reputable boarding kennel and check references of people providing pet sitting services. Supply sitter/kennel with photos of your pet in case they go missing during this time. Make sure they know who to contact should this occur.

