

# What to do if you find a Stray Companion Animal

## Safety and caution foremost

A frightened, sick or injured animal may behave unpredictably. Lost animals can be frightened and bite unexpectedly. Many cats are feral (wild) and won't allow you to touch them. Making a sudden move or chasing a lost animal may cause more harm than good and can cause an animal to run into traffic or run further away.



## So what can I do?

- Restrain the animal if at all possible. If an animal is injured on the road, attempt to divert traffic around him. If safely possible, try to get the animal on a blanket and pull to the side of the road.
- Call the AACL immediately and report an injured animal to the Inspectorate Department. Determine if an inspector is available to help and approximately how long it will take before help arrives.

- It is therefore most important to save the AACL's/ nearest animal welfare organisation's (AWO) contact details and after hours Emergency Clinic's numbers on your phone!
- When approaching a lost animal, move slowly and ensure the animal can see you whilst speaking calmly in a reassuring voice. Try to squat so that you're not leaning over the animal. Restrain it if possible. If this is not possible, try to lure it into your car by calling, or with food, keeping in mind that a lost animal may become frantic or aggressive once in the car with you.
- It is therefore a good idea to be prepared and keep the following items in the car to assist you: Collar and leash, heavy blanket, fold up cardboard box and water.
- If you are able, transport the animal to your nearest AWO or pound.
- If at home, see if you can contain the animal behind a closed gate in your yard, report it and try to locate the owner whilst waiting for the animal welfare authorities to arrive.
- Always check if the animal has a name tag or collar with the owner's contact details.
- Should the stray not have an ID tag, ask around the neighbourhood if anyone knows the stray. Sometimes this will lead you to the owners.

Issued by the

**ANIMAL ANTI-CRUELTY LEAGUE™**



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## I've found a stray pet! What do I do now?

Here are some suggestions for the pet's safety and hopefully reuniting it with its owner.

## Always report or call for help!

If you can't safely restrain a lost or injured animal, call the AACL or closest AWO immediately. Make sure you give the precise location of the animal, e.g. street/road names, landmarks etc. Give your cell number. If possible, stay with the animal till help arrives.

Always report details of a stray (the colour, size, breed etc. the exact location and the direction in which the animal is moving) as soon as possible to the closest animal welfare organisation.

## If I rescue a stray animal, can I decide to keep it whilst looking for its owner?

Finding and rescuing a stray animal does not entitle one to become the owner or keeper of this animal.

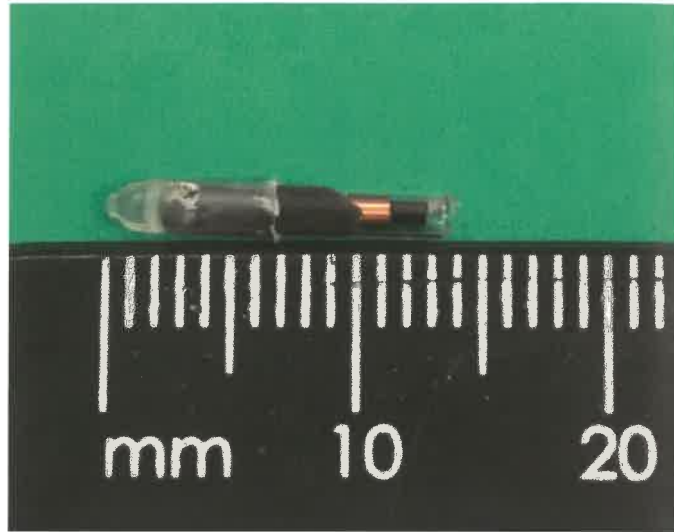
Because animals are classified as property under South African law, keeping a found animal without informing the relevant authorities, would be an offence.



"Fowls, geese or other domestic animals that stray or fly away do not become the property of the finder. A finder who keeps them would be guilty of theft". (Excerpt from Legal City)

You are therefore obliged to report a stray animal to your nearest AWO and are not entitled to keep or rehome stray animals (with or without any waiting period).

It is further obligatory to have the stray animal scanned for a microchip and also checked for ear tattoos.



The best chance of reuniting a lost animal with its owner would be to inform the AACL/ closest animal welfare organisation about you finding the stray. They have a wide network and have procedures in place to ensure that as many people as possible, are notified of the animal being found.

You are, however, welcome to assist in advertising the found animal in the most appropriate manner. Also remember to inform the veterinary practices in the area where the animal was found, as the animal may belong to one of their clients.

## Other points to consider:

- Taking an injured animal to a private veterinarian and cost implications thereof
- Understanding the limitations of animal shelters and euthanasia
- Adoption processes between animal welfare organisations vary and specific terms and conditions apply
- Only the AACL and certain animal welfare organisations have the power to take in stray animals



Lost and found dog reunited with happy owner.