

BE DOG THEFT AWARE



Dog theft is on the increase. Let's keep Ribble Valley dogs safe.

Thieves are watching public areas and could be waiting for the right moment to steal your dog.

They have been known to steal from cars, dogs left outside shops and in private gardens as well as out on walks. Every dog has a value, whether it be for resale, ransom, breeding or baiting.

Keep your dog safe.



Advice for keeping your dog safe:

Keep your dog safe

- Don't leave your dog unattended at any time
- Don't tie your dog up outside a shop
- Don't leave your dog in an unsecured garden (most dogs are stolen from gardens)

Be theft aware

- Be aware of your surroundings
- Are there other people in the area? Ask yourself - are they acting suspiciously?

Stranger Means Danger

- Be aware of strangers who show an interest in your dog
- Are they asking a lot of questions?
- Don't let them take any photographs
- Don't give out any information such as the dog's name or your address
- Watch out for people in vehicles (especially vans) parked where you wouldn't expect them

ID your dog

- Your dog should always wear a collar with a tag on it in a public place
- Include your surname, mobile phone number and postcode (don't put the dog's name or your address on it)
- Put your vet's telephone number on as well
- Make sure your dog is microchipped and keep the details up to date

When out walking

- Change your walking routes regularly
- Break up your daily routine(s)
- Don't let your dog wander off.
- Keep it close at all times. Better still, keep it on a lead
- Consider walking in pairs/groups
- Walk in open areas wherever possible
- Stay in well-lit areas at night
- Avoid areas which have "blind spots" e.g. dense woods

Personal protection

- You could carry a personal attack alarm or loud whistle
- ***This simple means of attracting attention could prevent your dog being stolen***
- This will discourage the thief who may leave empty handed

For more information on dog theft and on ways to help search for your dog, please visit www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/dogs

HAS YOUR DOG BEEN STOLEN?



If the worst does happen and your pet does go missing or you think it's been stolen, there are some steps you can take to have the best chance of being reunited with your pet.

For more information on dog theft and on ways to help search for your dog, please visit www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/dogs



What to do if your dog has been stolen:

- **Check your home and local area.**
 - Speak to friends and neighbours and see if they have seen your dog or if they have seen anything suspicious in the area.
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- **Call 999 if your dog has been stolen** providing as many descriptive details as you can. Make a note of the crime reference number. That way they can pick up any trends if it's happening more frequently in a certain area.
 - Contact your local council to make them aware. Dog warden services may encounter stray dogs.
 - Phone the microchip database that your pet is registered with and report them as missing, so that if anyone tries to re-register the chip number, you will be informed. Vets are also a good place to advertise the loss of any dog, as well as local animal rescue centres.
 - Noticeboards in local parks may also allow you to place missing dog details.
 - Register your pet on missing pet websites such as www.petslocated.com and www.Dogslost.co.uk - call them on **0844 800 3220** or **01633 668 364**, or email details (including a photo of your dog) to photos@doglost.co.uk. Also visit the National Pets register www.nationalpetregister.org
 - Make posters and display them in local areas like parks and vet surgeries. The poster should include a clear photograph and details of the circumstances.
 - Use Social Media. Post as much information about the theft as soon as you can. Spread the word. Include pictures of your dog.
 - Use Facebook lost and found pets groups e.g. Clitheroe lost and found pets.

- **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 of course they never had the dog in the first place and the owners are 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.

- **Puppy farming**

In addition to dog theft, puppy smuggling and illegal breeding through puppy farming is also 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 www.crimestoppers-uk.org/campaigns-media/campaigns/dog-theft