

PROCEDURE 11

Escaped or missing dog

Purpose: Contain the remaining dogs, organise a safe evidence-led search, and rapidly notify the owner and relevant authorities.



SITE CUSTOMISATION REQUIRED. This national baseline must be adapted through a site risk assessment, worker consultation and advice from the relevant state or territory regulator, emergency services, council, insurer and veterinarian. Human life takes priority.

Business and site details

Business legal name		Trading name	
Site / branch		ABN	
Physical address		Emergency entry / cross street	
Site manager		Incident Controller	
Maximum dogs		Maximum people	
Operating hours		Main phone	

Document control

Issue date		Next review date	
Approved by		Position	

Activate this procedure when

- Dog unaccounted for, observed leaving control, broken gate/lead/crate, transport discrepancy, owner reports wrong handover, or unexplained alarm/CCTV event.

P Protect people	A Alert and activate	W Welfare and secure dogs	S Sign off accountability
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Step-by-step emergency response

- 1 Freeze and contain.** Stop all dog movement. Lock or staff exits, count every remaining dog by name and search the immediate secure areas before opening gates. During the response, every movement of another dog must pass through one secured barrier before the next barrier opens.
- 2 Confirm identity and last point.** Record dog photo, collar/harness, microchip, temperament, recall cues, medical risk, exact last-seen time, direction and who saw it.
- 3 Call for urgent help if required.** Call 000 only where there is immediate danger to people, such as a live traffic hazard or active attack. Contact the local council/ranger and police assistance line where appropriate.
- 4 Deploy a controlled search.** Assign a search coordinator, safe sectors, check-in times and a search log. Use quiet familiar handlers, leads, food/toys where appropriate, vehicles and CCTV. Do not chase a fearful dog.
- 5 Notify the owner promptly.** Give verified facts, the active plan and a single contact point. Agree how the owner can help without disrupting safety.
- 6 Notify recovery networks.** Contact local vets, pounds/shelters and microchip registry; use approved public messaging with a current image, location, contact and safe approach advice.
- 7 On recovery.** Secure with two controls where practical, check for injury/heat/stress, scan/verify identity and arrange vet review when indicated.

Do not

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| STOP | Send unbriefed people into traffic, private property, bushland, floodwater or another hazard. |
| STOP | Publish owner personal details, blame or exact home address. |
| STOP | Close the incident until physical identity and welfare are confirmed. |

After the immediate danger

- Preserve CCTV, access logs, lead/crate/gate hardware and witness accounts.
- Report to the insurer, council, WHS or animal-welfare authority if required.
- Keep the owner updated and provide a factual written outcome.

Assigned emergency roles

Incident Controller	Selects the safe action, liaises with emergency services and authorises recovery.	
People / Area Warden	Protects people, sweeps assigned areas if safe and reports status.	
Dog Movement / Canine FA	Secures, identifies, separates, triages and moves dogs within training.	
Communications / Recorder	Calls services and owners, maintains the time log and preserves records.	

Procedure readiness checklist

- ☐ Maintain a current dog census with photo, microchip, collar, temperament, recall and owner contacts.
- ☐ Inspect gates, latches, leads, crates, handover controls and transport restraints each day.
- ☐ Prepare a search kit with slip leads, torches, radios, high-visibility clothing and search logs.
- ☐ Confirm CCTV access, gate records and the exact process for freezing all other dog movement.
- ☐ Keep council, ranger, pounds, shelters and microchip registry contacts current.
- ☐ Pre-approve a privacy-safe public message and appoint one spokesperson.

Site-specific arrangements

Last-point / CCTV review station	
Search kit location	
Search sectors / check-in point	
Council / microchip registry contacts	

Emergency contacts and notifications

Triple Zero only for immediate public danger		Owner, council / ranger and microchip registry	
Insurer / animal-welfare authority if required		Primary / emergency vet	

Recommended drill: Freeze all dog movement, confirm identity and last point, deploy sectors and reconcile the recovered dog.

Drill, review and authorisation record

Last drill date		Participants	
Corrective action owner		Action due date	
Procedure authorised by		Authorisation date	
Gaps identified / corrective actions			

Sources and further guidance

[5] [Triple Zero - Australia's emergency call service](#)

[19] [Safe Work Australia - Incident notification](#)

[21] [Agriculture Victoria - Boarding establishments code](#)

Review date: source links and national emergency numbers were checked for the master manual on 31 August 2026. Confirm local numbers, warnings, laws, codes, licences and veterinary arrangements before issue and at every review.