

If you love your cat tag it!



Register and identify your cat.

Cats found without a council identification tag when off your premises can be taken to the council pound and you can be fined.

How to register your cat

Contact your local council to register your cat. Once you have paid your registration fee, council will give you a tag to attach to your cat's collar. You should use an elasticised collar or safety collar that breaks away if the cat gets caught on something. Cats must be registered at three months old, and registration must be renewed by 10 April every year.

Permanent microchip identification is also recommended, so your cat can still be identified if the collar comes off. It is a requirement that all newly registered cats and dogs are microchipped. Talk to your vet about microchipping your cat, or ask your local council if they run discount microchipping days in your area.



Reasons to identify your cat

1. You are legally required to register and identify your cat. It is a requirement that all newly registered cats and dogs are microchipped. But aside from this, it is important to register and identify your cat so it can be returned to you if it is lost or impounded.
2. Very few cats entering pounds and shelters are identified, so most can't be easily returned to their owners. This contributes to the unnecessary euthanasia of thousands of cats every year.
3. Cat nuisance issues cause much concern in the community. Tagging cats helps councils differentiate between owned and unowned cats and deal with stray cat nuisance issues.

If your cat is found without a tag

If your cat is found wandering off your property and is not identified, it can be seized and impounded. You may have to pay a fine when reclaiming it from the pound.

Steps to finding your lost cat

1. Contact your local council pound. Descriptions of cats can vary greatly, and collars and tags can come off, so try to visit the pound to check for your cat. Repeat visits may be necessary until the cat is found. Take a cat carrier and documentation such as council registration papers, vaccination certificates, pedigree papers or photos. If your cat is not found, leave a description of it, when and where it was lost, and your name and number.
2. Call and visit neighbouring pounds, animal shelters and vet clinics (Animal shelters are listed in the Yellow Pages under 'Animal Welfare Organisations')

3. Ask neighbours if they have seen your cat. Search the neighbourhood and call your cat, particularly at night.
4. Put notices in local shop windows. Keep descriptions general so you can differentiate between a genuine and a nuisance caller by requesting they give you a more detailed description of the cat.
5. Finally, put a 'Lost and Found' notice in newspapers and notify radio stations that offer free announcements. (See 'Radio Stations' in the Yellow Pages). If your cat is registered and identified, any council or animal shelter that takes it in will notify you in writing within four days of impoundment. Councils must hold all identified impounded cats for eight days. It is important you begin looking for your lost cat as soon as you realise it is missing. If you do not reclaim your cat within eight days, council may rehouse or euthanase your cat.

Other legal things to know

If your cat wanders onto another person's property more than once, it may be seized and impounded. Council may issue an order to stop your cat trespassing, and if you don't comply you may be fined.

Some councils require cats to be confined to their owner's property during certain hours. Others prohibit or restrict cats in some places. Check with your local council to see if these requirements apply in your area.

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So if you love your cat, tag it

Register your cat and make sure it wears identification. If you don't breed your cat desex it. For its own safety, keep your cat inside your house or in an enclosure at night.

For more advice or information

Contact your local council if you have questions about your rights and responsibilities as a pet owner. Your council will also deal with concerns about wandering or nuisance pets.

For general information about responsible pet ownership, and contact details for relevant pet organisations, visit www.pets.dpi.vic.gov.au or call 136 186 for the cost of a local call.

