



www.sunbearsquad.org

Neighborhood Watch

Leader Sheet

Please review this information carefully **FIRST**. Your responsibility as a neighborhood leader and Good Samaritan for animals means that you must be knowledgeable, careful, and disciplined. (We already know that you are kind-hearted and energetic.) Thank you!

1 _PLAN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

- Study the Sunbear Squad “Learn About Neglect” tutorial online:
www.sunbearsquad.org/animalabuse
- Learn the known risks for pets (see reverse side of this sheet).
- Print out, read, and save your state laws for animal abuse and neglect:
www.animallaw.info (see US Laws, Select by State)
- Fill out your Wallet Card phone numbers, insert in wallet.
- Get a spiral notebook to insert your state laws, to keep notes about neighborhood pets, and attach your Sunbear Squad button to the spiral for safekeeping (enclosed).
- Map your route by drawing lines and arrows; include alleys and backroads.
- Schedule to cover your route on a set date and mark your calendar (every month).
- Visit and inform your neighbors, or leave a door hanger (enclosed, or download the file online).
- Post your window sign prominently (enclosed, or download the file online).
- Inform your local rescue groups and humane society about your Neighborhood Watch program.

2 _TRAVEL YOUR ROUTE EVERY MONTH (or more often as needed)

- Gather notebook, Sunbear Squad button, Wallet Card, pen, and mobile phone.
- Travel the route on your scheduled date.
- Take notes about each pet you see (address, condition of animal, environment) to learn as much as possible about the neighborhood’s pet residents.
- Talk to any neighbors you see, emphasizing that the Neighborhood Watch program helps to identify stray animals and help animals in crisis. Give your phone number.
- If you see a pet or animal with a problem, talk to the owners in a friendly, nonjudgmental way. Remember, most problems result from lack of knowledge or awareness or even a personal problem. Be helpful and

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About Sunbear, who would have been 8 years old in early 2009

Sunbear was a young chocolate Labrador Retriever who was trapped in a West Virginia townhouse laundry room for 6 weeks, and neighbors in adjoining townhouses did not call the authorities. His owner had made arrangements for Sunbear to be adopted by a family, but they never showed up. Sunbear’s owner never called that family to make sure he was picked up, or to ask how he was adapting to his new home and family. A bag of Sunbear’s food sat outside the laundry room door while he slowly starved inside. Gene Fields, his Animal Control officer, sleuthed his owner for months; he was found in Indiana. His owner was tried and convicted of animal neglect, and he served the maximum sentence and paid a fine. West Virginian legislators enraged about Sunbear’s ordeal enacted stronger laws against abuse and neglect. Now the web site dedicated to his memory, www.sunbearsquad.org, provides knowledge, tools, and inspiration to encourage neighbors be better Good Samaritans for animals.

Continued ... 3_Maintain the Neighborhood Watch

attempt to gain cooperation. Find a solution within the neighborhood if possible. Use the power of the neighborhood to add pressure if needed, by asking others to assist. Always try first to solve the problem within the community of neighbors. You will build stronger neighborhoods and communities.

- If your resolution efforts do not yield results, talk to the authorities (see Wallet Card for phone numbers).
- If the pet is in danger, act immediately by calling the authorities, and stay to help. Provide all reasonable assistance, keeping your safety as top priority.

3_Maintain the Neighborhood Watch

- If severe weather threatens, take steps to protect neighborhood pets that are at risk (kept outside) by calling owners and offering assistance.
- Be the neighborhood “go-to” person for pet information and phone numbers. Keep information about pet sitters, dog walkers, interesting web sites, sources for straw/bedding/insulation, etc.
- If you find a stray dog or cat, take immediate action by calling the authorities. Attempt to catch the animal if you can do SAFELY, and hold the dog or cat until animal control arrives.
- If your community does not have shelter facilities or animal control services, lobby local leaders and pet-related business owners to establish such facilities and services. *Bring change to your community. Be a leader!*

Need more Neighborhood Watch materials? Every item in your kit is available for free downloading at www.sunbearsquad.org/squad.shtml or buttons can be ordered through the online Sunbear Squad store. Tshirts, mousepads, bags, and other items are available at the store as well.

RISK FACTORS THAT THREATEN PETS

- **Moving households**—pets get trapped behind closed doors because they follow their owners everywhere when they sense that something is going on, and then the door shuts in their faces by accident
- **Traveling with pets**, who slip out a car door, get confused by unfamiliar surroundings, and run away because they are afraid
- **Living next to busy highways**—pets are injured or killed by vehicles
- **Outside and farm dogs** are at high risk for neglect in three ways: lack of food or water, lack of veterinary care, and exposure to extreme weather (heat, cold, storms, etc.)
- **Dogs kept in large numbers**, such as hunting or sled dogs, have a higher risk of neglect or bad living conditions
- **Pets living in abusive households**—the link between wife abusers and child/pet abusers is proven and common
- **Pets waiting in parked cars** on hot days—6 minutes or less is all it can take to heat your car interior above 100 degrees
- **Dogs and cats that roam at will**, without wearing collars and tags
- **Dogs who have not been obedience-trained** or house-trained are more likely to be dumped or kept on a chain or in a kennel
- **Thunderstorms and fireworks** that scare pets into running away
- **Give-away pets**—many end up in product-testing facilities
- **Drug houses**—addicted pet owners forget about feeding and watering their pets, or skimp on food to save money for drugs; worse, dogs are sometimes trained to attack strangers

A note about the mortgage crisis: It has created a CRISIS for some household pets of foreclosed-upon owners.

The former homeowners leave their pets behind, trapped in empty homes, because they can't take their pets with them for various reasons. They don't understand that weeks or months may elapse before agents inspect the home.

Please take action when a home is foreclosed upon in your neighborhood. Be a Good Samaritan. **Go stand near the home and call out repeatedly for the pet;** it may bark or meow or come to the window. Listen and watch for signs of life inside the home.

Do this several days in a row because some traumatized pets may be frightened, too frightened to respond at first. **You may save a life!**