



Pointers In Need Information Sheet #7

“Keeping our Pointers Safe”

March 2022

It is a tragic reality that every year in the UK, several dogs are lost shortly after they have been fostered or re-homed by rescue organisations. Typically, a new dog escapes from a garden or slips a lead during a walk. Leaping out of an open car or van door is sadly far from uncommon too, occasionally even mid-transit during the journey to their new home.

None of us want to receive that call that says a dog matching the description we advertised on *DogLost* or posted on *FaceBook* has been found, dead.

When we make plans for our rescue Pointer to join our families, we must remember that, for our new friend, it could be a time of great stress and worry. There may be several ‘firsts’ for him/her to overcome; the first time travelling in a vehicle, the first time they’ve met you, and quite possibly the first time they’ve encountered a house.

Imagine that, your Pointer has just emerged, anxious and bewildered, from a very long journey in a noisy, vibrating machine. Next, their senses are assaulted by the sights and smells of new surroundings and a strange new person trying to take them somewhere. Then, there is the house to navigate, stairs, enclosed garden etc. Far from being a place of comfort and sanctuary, at first it could be overwhelming. The sight of a mirror or reflected glass, the noise from a tap, a kettle, a washing machine, a TV. When we combine these experiences with the imprint of what has often been a traumatised background, we have a recipe for a Pointer that could be extremely nervous and fearful of what is to come.

A frightened Pointer has a lot of nervous energy. His instincts will be on high alert, and his main aim will be to get away from the source of that fear. To a Pointer, this may mean looking for ways to flee and escape.

Pointers are nimble, strong willed and very smart. They also have extraordinary stamina and if they manage to bolt, they can cover many miles and quickly. Sadly, a nervous Pointer that is new to their adopter or fosterer may not know their name or understand the call of a whistle. They may not realise what is expected of them. They certainly won’t know anything about the dangers of busy roads, rail lines, or possibly a trigger- happy gamekeepers.

So put yourself in the mindset of the Pointer and consider everything from his viewpoint, think how he is feeling what is he experiencing. As adopters and fosterers, it is **OUR JOB** to make sure that our new friends are safe in our care. We need to expect the unexpected and plan for it so that we can provide the safe haven that these beautiful animals need and deserve.

Your Home-Checker will have highlighted any aspects of your home/garden that may need adjustments to keep a rescue Pointer safe. To recap, the key areas of concern could be:

Boundary fences - these need to be tall enough and secure/strong enough so that they cannot be scrambled up and over even by the most determined Pointer. Any obstacles that can help a Pointer achieve the great escape must be moved. Think bins, tables, BBQs, piles of firewood as a climbing aid – a 6ft fence could actually be reduced to 3ft if the bin is placed against it. Any netting between fence posts must be securely fastened and entrenched in the footings so that your Pointer cannot dig out from underneath.

Gates that are easily opened due to a faulty latch, that can be blown open. Those gates that shut fast, with spring mechanisms just in case visitors cannot always be trusted to shut the gate are ideal.

Collars and/or harnesses that are adjusted properly so that they cannot be wriggled out of during walks and adventures.

Being **securely fastened in the car**, with no ability to jump out once the boot is lifted or car doors are opened. Car dog cages are ideal.

POINTERS IN NEED

Finally. We make it very clear – and stipulate this in our adoption agreement - that rescued Pointers **MUST NOT GO OFF LEAD** under any circumstances unless they are in a secure, enclosed space, or until you and your Pointer have mastered the all-important recall command.

Pointers are great innovators, so we must be too, always one step ahead. By taking these steps to keep our new four-legged friend safe, we will help them to relax and start enjoying life the way they are meant to.

www.pointersinneed.org.uk
info@pointersinneed.org.uk

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