

This profile is intended to be a generic description of how a missing dog walker might behave in the same style as [Robert Koester's Lost Person Behaviour](#). It does not describe any specific individual.

Dog Walkers

Dog walkers include commercial and recreational dog walkers, people walking their own and friend's dogs. When filling in a lost person questionnaire, it will be useful to complete a separate dossier of information for each dog being walked including details such as the name and description of each, as well as their behaviour.

People walk dogs for exercise; their own, and the pets, as well as for the daily excretions of the animal. The age and health of the dog(s) as well as the person will determine the distance they usually walk, and possible destinations. In general people with larger dogs will walk further than those with smaller, toy breeds but this is not consistent. Knowing the breed, age and health of the dog may assist the searchers in determining the destination and the behaviour of the walker.

Most dog walkers have a number of trails, destinations or areas that they frequent with their pets or charges. They usually also have a habitual time of day that they walk. Dog walkers will be very familiar with the trails they use and will not take a map. Some dog walkers may choose trails where the chance of encountering a hiker, dog walker or mountain biker is remote - trails that only hikers or dog walkers use. This may be because of a wish to reduce the chances of a bad interaction with another trail user, or to let their pets off leash.

If a last known position is not known, interviewing friends and family will be especially important to determine the possible destination.

Because of the familiarity with an area, dog walkers may approach the trip with minimal or no preparation - light clothing, and very little additional equipment. Since most dog walkers have to walk their dogs every day, rain or shine, they may treat inclement weather as an inconvenience - and may dress very lightly knowing exactly the time they will be out, and that warm and dry clothing is waiting at home. Often people with larger dogs seek a secluded area where the dog may be let off leash to get more exercise. Many people choose a park or open area where they can throw a ball.

Dog walkers often choose a circular route for variety over an out-and-back by the same trail. Some become familiar with areas that have networks of trails where they can mix and match routes for variety.

People walking dogs as a business conform to these behaviours as well, but are often more prepared than a recreational dog owner, but not by much. They will have dog bags, some first aid equipment, and often have comfortable dog walking clothes that are comfortable for extended trips. Commercial dog walkers sometimes offer different services such as "hikes"

or “beach” trips for the dogs. They almost always drive to a location in a vehicle with several dogs, and walk from wherever the vehicle is parked.

Dog behaviour experts state that it is unlikely for a dog or group of dogs to leave the subject, even if he or she is not their owner. The pack mentality will act to keep the group together.

It is often suggested to use dog whistles to attract the animals. Dog training experts say that dog whistles would only be effective if the dog has been trained to respond to the whistle and there’s no evidence that the sound from these whistles travels further than those that make sounds in the human hearing range.

Hallmark behaviours

- Zero to no equipment (unless a business)
- No maps
- Very knowledgeable about trails
- May seek secluded areas with low chance of interactions with the public
- May seek to let dogs off leash
- Most are quite fit

Many dog walkers take “poo bags” to properly dispose of their pet’s waste. A clue could be the colour or brand of the bag. Some dog walkers will bag the waste and leave it on the trail to pick up on the way back. Some will pitch the waste with the bag into the bush. Both scenarios leave an opportunity for a clue.

Dogs and owners will leave tracks, but if they are in an area frequented by other dog walkers the tracks and scent will be very confusing to follow.

Statistics

Until more data is gathered, dog walkers should be categorized as hikers for the purposes of statistics and those tables from Lost Person Behavior used.

Investigation

- Determine dog breed(s) and profile(s)
- Previous incidents
- Areas frequented
- Dog walking behaviour (trail, hike, dog park)
- Does the dog respond to a particular name or call
- Animal sightings in the area

Search Techniques

- Opportunity to attract dog as well as lost person
- Sound sweep may be very effective if dogs bark
- Dogs that are used to tracking other dogs

Investigative Questions

- Number and breed of dogs
- Size, age, and fitness of dog
- Dog behaviour (protective, will it bark)
- List address and owner of each dog (if not owned by missing person)
- Professional dog walker
- Equipment carried
- New area or routine
- Normal walking times
- Brand / colour of dog “poo bags”

Reflex Tasking

- Search trails with a sound sweep
- Look for tracks and signs of

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