

Being able to identify a pet is very important

BY CAROL CARIDAD

President, Paws4You Rescue



Every pet owner can tell you that caring for an animal is a lot of responsibility. And even those who are the most

cautious sometimes forget one crucial step to ensuring their pet's safety — identification.

A large part of the reason we have so many animals in our shelters is that the pet does not have proper identification and therefore cannot be returned to its owner. This problem could easily be solved if every pet owner took the time to set up his or her pet with proper identification. There are several options when it comes to pet IDs including collar tags, microchips and even tattoos.

The most basic way to identify a dog is with collar tags. Collar identification tags are available through a wide variety of sources including wherever pet products are sold. What's great about collar tags is that they range in color, shape and size so that there's something to fit every owner's budget and every pet's personality. However, be sure to check these tags regularly for readability. Sometimes even though tags are engraved, they can become worn

out and hard to read.

Another well-known method to maximize your pet's identification is with a microchip. Microchips are tiny chips that are inserted under the animal's skin usually between the shoulder blades. When an animal is lost, veterinarians or shelters will scan the animal for a microchip. The scan produces an identification code, which is then called in to the microchip company and used to trace the owner's information. It's not uncommon to adopt a new pet that already has a microchip, as many breeders and adoption organizations provide this service. For example, Paws4You mails in the new registration of their adopted animals as a courtesy for the new owners.

Pet owners might also choose to use a tattoo system to ID their pets. Although not as popular as collar tags and microchips, tattoos can also be an efficient approach to identification. Similar to microchips, tattooed identification codes help locate owners. The codes are tattooed onto the animal in areas with little hair, such as the inside of an ear or abdomen.

Regardless of what identification method you use, it is crucial to make sure that your pet has at least one form of identification. And because collar tags can sometimes get misplaced, I recommend using either the microchip or tattoo method as a



back up. And please keep all information current (change of address, for example) because many animals end up at shelters with outdated info that cannot be traced back to the families.

If you have questions about your pet's identification or another pet issue, you can visit Paws4You Rescue at the Colonial Palms PetSmart, 13621 S. Dixie Hwy. every Sunday (except holidays) from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. or visit our website at www.paws4you.org for more information.

PET OF THE WEEK

Rosie is a Foxhound mix only 2 years old and 55 pounds. She is a happy and active hound that enjoys daily running or long walks. Go to the website for more information and to fill out an adoption application: www.paws4you.org.

Carol Caridad is president of Paws 4 You Rescue. She may be contacted by calling 786-242-7377, by addressing email to carol@paws4you.org or by visiting www.paws4you.org.