



Maricopa County
Animal Care and Control

ESCAPING DOGS



The act of escaping from a yard usually means that the dog is either trying to go somewhere or is trying to get away from something.

Understanding what causes your dog to exit the premises will help in correcting the behavior and keeping him within the confines of your property.

- If your dog is trying to go somewhere, this may be his way of trying to find YOU. Some dogs will escape the backyard only to go to the front porch area and lay down waiting for the owners to return.
- Another reason a dog tries to go somewhere could be because there are other dogs roaming the neighborhood and your dog wants to join in the pack. Or perhaps the children next door have fed the dog before and he is simply trying to find the food source once again.
- In the case of the dog that is trying to get away from something, it may be something as simple as boredom due to perhaps lack of exercise or interaction with people.

Whatever the case may be, there are a few steps you can take to prevent your dog from scaling the fence or tunneling his way under the it.

Jumpers:

- Consider burying a piece of chicken wire about a quarter inch under the dirt in the area(s) where the dog escapes. With a surface that feels uncomfortable for jumping, the dog will probably think twice about the jump.
- Another method would be to construct a second, smaller fence about eighteen inches high and about thirty-six inches or so away from the existing fence. This will prevent the dog from getting that running start to make his final leap.
- Check for any other structures up against the fence that will give your dog that extra boost over the top, such as a dog house or wood pile.

Diggers:

- For the under the fence digger, you can place some cement garden dividers four or five inches below the surface to hinder the digging process.

For more information on animal care, behavior or MCACC programs, contact
(602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.gov
Excerpts from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Cats International.

These methods are meant to prevent your dog from escaping but do not address the behavior itself. You need to investigate why your dog is leaving, where he goes, and your reaction to finding him.

Before the problem begins, you can do some things to prevent the behavior from starting at all. Make sure your dog has the appropriate exercise he needs. Simply throwing a ball back and forth in the backyard for an active dog may not be sufficient.

- A stimulating, brisk walk for your dog will go a long way to relaxing it and will benefit you as well.
- Give your dog some stimulating activities to do while you are gone. It will help occupy an idle mind. A sturdy chew toy will keep your dog occupied, giving it less time to think about escaping.
- If you place your dog in the backyard when you leave, do not make it a major event. This will only serve to create anxieties in the dog, as it will begin to cue him or her that you are leaving before you even walk out the door. Save the hugs and kisses for when you return home.

If you have tried every humane method that you can think of to prevent your dog from escaping, you may want to consider professional help. A qualified behaviorist can help you determine the cause of the behavior and how best to address the problem.

Caution should be taken to not employ methods that are not only abusive in nature but counter-productive to correcting the undesired behavior.

For additional behavior information, you may contact the following organizations:

- Arizona Animal Welfare league at 602-273-6850, questions@aawl.org
- Arizona Humane Society at 602-395-3877, www.azhumane.org