BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Pet GPS Trackers & Smart Collars

Fi, Tractive, Halo and AirTag collars: subscriptions, safe zones, escape alerts and finding a lost pet — in plain English

A plain-English guide for pet lovers and their families

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Fi, Tractive, Halo, AirTag, SmartTag & Tile · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to pet GPS trackers and smart collars: the small devices that tell your phone where your dog or cat is, and warn you when they slip out of the yard. Read it in any order and at your own pace. Models and prices change often, so this guide teaches you how these trackers work, what the monthly plans really cost, and what to do on the day a pet goes missing, rather than telling you which one to buy.

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PART 1

Getting Started

What a pet tracker is, the one big difference between GPS trackers and Bluetooth tags, and whether a tracker makes sense for your dog or cat. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you've ever stood at the back door calling a dog's name into the dark, or searched the neighborhood for a cat who didn't come home for supper, you already know why pet trackers exist. And if someone in the family just handed you a smart collar and said, "Here, put the app on your phone," this guide is for you too.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help folks here in Portage County feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, and without trying to sell you anything. When I use a word like "geofence" or "LTE-M," I'll stop and explain it right then.

What this guide will do for you

- Explain the big difference between a **GPS tracker** with its own cell service and a **Bluetooth tag** like an AirTag, so you buy the right kind the first time.
- Lay out what the monthly or yearly plans honestly cost, and how to cancel one later.
- Walk you through setup, a safe fit, safe zones and escape alerts that don't cry wolf.
- Cover cats, who need breakaway collars and very light trackers.
- Remind you why a **microchip** still matters, and how to keep its contact details current.
- Give you a calm, step-by-step plan for the day a pet goes missing, including local help and the scams that target worried owners.

The big promise: you can't break it by learning

A pet tracker is one of the more forgiving gadgets you'll own. You charge it, clip it on, and look at a map on your phone. Settings like safe zones and alert sounds can be changed as often as you like. Nothing in this guide asks you to do anything you can't undo. The only parts I'll ask you to slow down on are the ones that involve your pet's comfort and safety: the fit of the collar, and how a training collar is used.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

A tracker that's set up well turns "Where could she be?" into a dot on a map. It can tell you the moment your dog leaves the yard, while he's still close by, instead of an hour later. For a family that worries about a pet who likes to wander, that's real peace of mind.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pairs with Device Training

If you'd like someone to sit with you and go through the app on your own phone, this guide pairs with my **Device Training** service. Chapter 27 has the details.

I'm only a phone call away

If anything in this guide leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question.

Let's start with the most important idea in the whole guide: there are two very different kinds of "pet trackers."

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

GPS Trackers vs. Bluetooth Tags: The Big Difference

Walk down the pet aisle or scroll an online store and you'll see dozens of things called "pet trackers." Nearly all of them fall into one of two families, and they work in completely different ways. Knowing which is which is the most useful thing you'll learn here.

GPS trackers with their own cell service

A **GPS tracker** (Fi, Tractive and Halo are the best-known names) has two parts inside. A **GPS** receiver works out where the collar is from satellites, the same way your car's map does. A tiny **cellular** radio, like a very small cell phone, then sends that location to the company, which shows it in the app on your phone. Because it has its own connection, it can tell you where your pet is even when the pet is miles from you and from anyone else's phone.

That cell connection is why these trackers need a **subscription**: a monthly, yearly or multi-year plan that pays for the cell service. Many newer trackers use **LTE-M**, a low-power version of the 4G cell network built for small devices like this.

Bluetooth tags

A **Bluetooth tag** (an Apple **AirTag**, a Samsung **Galaxy SmartTag**, a **Tile** or a Google **Pixel Tag**) has no GPS and no cell service. It sends out a short-range Bluetooth signal. When any phone on the same "finding network" passes within range, that phone quietly reports the tag's location. Apple's network is made of the Apple devices around us; Google's **Find Hub** network is made of Android phones; Samsung and Tile have their own.

That's clever for lost keys in a busy parking lot. It's much less useful for a dog running through a field, a creek bed or a woodlot, where there may be no phones passing at all.

	GPS tracker (Fi, Tractive, Halo)	Bluetooth tag (AirTag, SmartTag, Tile)
How it finds the pet	Satellites, then its own cell service	Strangers' phones that pass nearby
Live tracking	Yes, in a live or lost mode	No; you see where it *was* last seen
Escape alerts	Yes, built for it	Not reliably
Monthly plan	Required	None needed (some optional extras)

	GPS tracker (Fi, Tractive, Halo)	Bluetooth tag (AirTag, SmartTag, Tile)
Battery	Recharge every few days to weeks	Coin battery lasts about a year
Made for pets?	Yes	No; made for keys, bags and wallets

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

If someone offers you "a GPS tracker with no monthly fee," you'll now know to ask which kind it is. Almost always it's a Bluetooth tag, and that's fine for some jobs, but it won't follow a runaway dog across the township.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pairs with your Bluetooth trackers guide

Our **Bluetooth Trackers (AirTag, Tile & SmartTag)** guide covers tags in depth: setup, sharing, batteries and unwanted-tracker alerts. This guide focuses on pets.

CHAPTER 3

Is a Tracker Right for Your Pet?

Not every pet needs a GPS collar. A tracker adds a monthly cost and one more thing to charge. It's worth a few minutes to think about your own pet before you spend money.

Good reasons to get one

- **An escape artist.** A dog who digs under the fence, slips the gate, or bolts out the front door when the mail comes.
- **A hound or a runner.** Breeds that follow their nose and can cover a lot of ground fast.
- **A new rescue** who doesn't know the neighborhood or the way home yet.
- **Country living.** Big yards, open fields and woods, where a pet can be out of sight in seconds.
- **An indoor-outdoor cat** whose roaming worries you (Chapter 12 covers cats).
- **Travel and visits** to a new place, a campground, or a relative's house, where a scared pet might run.
- **Peace of mind** when a pet sitter, dog walker or grandchild is in charge.

When a tracker may not be worth it

- **A homebody** who never leaves your side and stays inside. A microchip and an ID tag may be enough (Chapter 20).
- **A very small cat or dog** where even a small tracker would be too heavy. Check the maker's weight limits.
- **If the monthly plan would be a strain.** A well-fitted collar with an ID tag, a microchip with current contact details, and a secure fence or gate do most of the work for free.

TIP

Start with the cheapest protections

Before any gadget: an ID tag with your phone number on the collar, a microchip registered to your current phone number, and a current dog license tag if you live in Ohio. These cost little and work even when a battery is dead.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Thinking about your own pet first keeps you from paying for features you won't use, or from skipping a tracker that would truly help an escape-prone dog.

PART 2

Choosing a Tracker

The main GPS trackers, what the plans honestly cost, the truth about AirTags and other tags on a collar, and a simple checklist before you buy.

CHAPTER 4

The Main GPS Trackers: Fi, Tractive and Halo

Three names come up most often in the United States. Each takes a slightly different approach. Here's what each one is, in plain words, as of November 2026. Models change about once a year, so treat the model names as a starting point and check the maker's website for the current one.

Fi

Fi makes smart collars and trackers for dogs, and now cats. The current line includes the **Fi Series 3+** collar for dogs and the smaller **Fi Mini** for cats and small dogs. They use GPS and the LTE-M cell network to send the pet's location to the **Fi** app. The Series 3+ charges on a **Fi Base**, a small charging stand that sits in your home.

As of November 2026, Fi's own help pages list the Fi Mini at $99.00 and the Series 3+ at $129 for the hardware, plus a required membership (Chapter 5). Sales and bundles change these numbers often.

In July 2026 Fi also launched the **Fi Ultra**, a rugged clip-on tracker that news reports describe as able to use Starlink satellites for coverage where there's no cell signal, in the United States only. Reported prices have varied since launch, so check Fi's website for the current price and plan.

Tractive

Tractive makes small clip-on GPS trackers that attach to the collar your pet already wears, plus a cat version with its own collar. The current models are the **Tractive DOG 6** (with a larger XL version for big dogs) and the **Tractive CAT 6 Mini**, which comes on its own breakaway collar. Everything happens in the **Tractive GPS** app. The hardware often costs less up front than the others, and a plan is required.

Halo

The **Halo Collar 5** is different: it's a GPS tracker *and* a wireless fence and training collar. You draw boundaries on a map in the **Halo** app, and the collar gives your dog cues as it nears the edge. You choose whether each cue is a sound, a vibration, or **static**. Halo's help pages say static is never required: the collar can run on sound and vibration only. As of November 2026 Halo lists the collar at $599 (it's often on sale), and its membership plans start at $9.99 a month.

HEADS UP

A training collar is a bigger decision

Any collar that corrects a dog, even gently, deserves a conversation with your veterinarian or a trainer first, especially for a nervous, elderly or very small dog. Check Halo's current guidance on age and size before buying for a small or young dog. This guide explains the tracking side, not dog training.

What about other brands?

You'll also see trackers from other companies, including hunting-dog systems and store brands. The same questions apply to all of them: does it have its own cell service, what does the plan cost, how long does the battery last, and does it work where you live? Chapter 8 turns those into a checklist.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the three main approaches (a collar with a base, a small clip-on tracker, or a fence-and-training collar) helps you match the tool to your pet and your yard.

CHAPTER 5

Subscriptions: What You'll Really Pay

The price on the box is only the start. Every GPS tracker in this guide needs a paid plan to send its location over the cell network. Over two or three years, the plan usually costs more than the tracker. Here's how to think about it.

Why there's a plan at all

The tracker is a tiny cell phone. Just like your own phone, someone has to pay the cell company for its data. The plan also pays for the app, the maps and the company's servers. Without an active plan, the live map, escape alerts and lost mode stop working.

What the main plans cost, as of November 2026

Maker	What Fi, Tractive or Halo says	Good to know
Fi	Membership $99.00 for 6 months (U.S.), renewing every six months; other lengths are offered	Series 3+ memberships have a 6-month minimum commitment unless you buy a longer term
Tractive	Basic plan $9.00 a month billed yearly ($108), or $6.00 a month billed every 2 years ($144)	Premium costs more and adds Family Sharing (Chapter 18); 30-day money-back guarantee
Halo	Bronze $9.99, Silver $14.99, Gold $19.99 a month; monthly, yearly or 2-year billing	Bronze allows up to 5 fences, Silver 20, Gold unlimited

Prices change with sales and new models, so check the maker's own website on the day you buy. Look for the price per month *and* how long you're committing for.

Questions to ask before you pay

1. How long is the commitment? Can I pay monthly, or must I pay six months, a year or more up front?
2. Does the plan renew automatically? (Almost all do.) When is the next charge?
3. Is there a money-back period if it doesn't suit my pet? Tractive, for example, offers a 30-day money-back guarantee on its plans, claimed through a separate refund request.
4. What does a second pet cost? Is there a multi-pet discount?
5. Which features need the more expensive plan, such as sharing with family or traveling abroad?

6. Can I pause the plan in winter or while the pet is boarded? Fi lets you pause for 1, 2 or 3 months, and Halo also offers a pause.
7. How do I cancel? (Chapter 24 shows you, step by step.)

TIP

Write down the renewal date

As soon as you sign up, write the plan's renewal date on the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 28 and on your calendar. A yearly or two-year plan can renew for a large amount without much warning.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the true cost over two or three years lets you compare trackers fairly, and keeps a surprise charge off your credit card statement.

CHAPTER 6

AirTags, SmartTags and Tile on a Collar: The Honest Truth

Lots of people clip an AirTag or another Bluetooth tag to a pet's collar. It's cheap, there's no monthly plan, and the holders are sold everywhere. Before you rely on one, here's what it can and can't do.

Where a tag on the collar can help

- Finding a cat who's hiding in the house, the garage or a closet. Within Bluetooth range you can make the tag play a sound.
- A dog who wanders into a busy neighborhood or a town, where lots of phones pass by and report the tag.
- A backup to a GPS tracker, for the day the GPS battery runs flat.

The honest limits

- A tag only updates when a phone on its network passes nearby. In fields, woods and quiet country roads, there may be no phones for hours.
- There's no live tracking. You see where the pet *was* last seen, not where it is right now.
- There's no real escape alert. Some apps can warn you when you leave a tag behind, but that's not the same as an alert the moment a dog leaves the yard.
- Google's own Find Hub guidance says locator tags shouldn't be used to track pets.
- A tag that comes loose can be chewed. Samsung warns that a SmartTag that detaches may be a swallowing hazard for pets and young children, and the coin battery inside is especially dangerous.

Tag	Works with	Finding network
Apple AirTag (original and 2nd generation)	iPhone or iPad	Apple's Find My network
Samsung Galaxy SmartTag2 / SmartTag3	Samsung Galaxy phones (SmartTag3 has partial iPhone support)	Samsung's Galaxy Find Network
Google Pixel Tag and other Find Hub tags	Android phones	Google's Find Hub network
Tile	iPhone and Android	Tile's network (Tile is owned by Life360)

STAY SAFE

If you do use a tag on a collar

Use a sturdy, fully enclosed holder made for collars, and check it every few days for cracks. If a pet ever chews or swallows a tag or its coin battery, call your veterinarian right away; a swallowed coin battery is an emergency.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Used for what they're good at, tags are a handy, inexpensive extra. Used as your only plan for a dog who runs, they can let you down on the one day it matters.

CHAPTER 7

Why Apple Says AirTag Isn't a Pet Tracker

Apple sells AirTag to find *things*: keys, bags, wallets and luggage. When Apple introduced the second-generation AirTag in January 2026, its announcement said plainly that the new AirTag is designed exclusively for tracking objects, and not people or pets. It has a louder speaker and a longer Precision Finding range than the first one, but it's still the same kind of Bluetooth tag described in Chapter 2.

The anti-stalking alerts, and why they affect pets

Because a small tag could be slipped into someone's bag, Apple, Google and Samsung added **unwanted-tracking alerts**. If an AirTag that isn't yours travels with you, your iPhone can warn you that an unknown item is moving with you, and Android phones can show a similar alert. An AirTag that's been away from its owner for a while can also play a sound when it's moved.

That's a good thing for personal safety. But think about what it means on a lost dog: a kind neighbor who takes your dog in for the night may get an alert that an unknown AirTag is moving with them, and the tag may start beeping. Some people will understand and look for your contact details; others may be alarmed. And it means an AirTag on a pet behaves exactly like what it is: a tag for objects.

If you use an AirTag anyway

1. Open the **Find My** app and tap **Items** to see your AirTag.
2. If the pet is missing, tap the AirTag and turn on **Lost Mode**, so anyone who finds it can see your message and contact details by holding their phone near it.
3. Put your phone number on a regular ID tag too. A finder may not think to scan an AirTag.
4. Never put an AirTag on a person's belongings without their knowledge. Apple notes that tracking people without consent is a crime in many places.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Understanding why these alerts exist means you won't be surprised if a finder calls about a "strange beeping tag," and you'll see why a real pet tracker is the better tool for a dog that roams.

CHAPTER 8

Before You Buy: A Simple Checklist

Take this list to the store, or keep it open while you shop online. A good answer to each question will steer you to a tracker you'll keep using.

The checklist

Ask about	What to look for
Kind of tracker	GPS with its own cell service, or a Bluetooth tag? (Chapter 2)
Coverage	Does it work where you live and where you take your pet? Check the maker's coverage map or country checker (Chapter 17).
Plan cost	Monthly cost, commitment length, auto-renewal, money-back period (Chapter 5).
Weight and size	Is it light enough for your pet? Is there a cat version?
Battery	How many days between charges, and how does it charge? (Chapter 16)
Your phone	Does the app run on your iPhone or Android phone? Is it easy for you to read?
Sharing	Can family, a dog walker or a pet sitter see the pet too? Does that cost extra? (Chapter 18)
Water	Is it waterproof enough for a dog who swims or rolls in puddles?
Collar	Does it clip to your own collar, or come with its own? Is a breakaway collar offered for cats?

TIP

Buy from the maker or a store you know

Buy from the maker's own website or a well-known store. That way you get the real product, the warranty, and a clear plan. Chapter 23 explains the fake-tracker ads to avoid.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Ten minutes with this checklist can save you from a tracker that doesn't fit your pet, doesn't work in your area, or costs more each year than you expected.

PART 3

Setting Up, Fitting and Safe Zones

Getting the tracker out of the box and onto your phone, a safe and comfortable fit, safe zones and escape alerts, and the special care cats need.

CHAPTER 9

Setting Up Your Tracker, Step by Step

Every brand's app looks a little different, but setup follows the same pattern for Fi, Tractive and Halo. Set aside about an hour on a calm day, with the pet nearby but not yet wearing anything. Have your phone, your Wi-Fi password and a credit card for the plan ready.

Before you start

- **Charge it fully first.** A new tracker usually arrives partly charged. A full first charge avoids a setup that stalls halfway (Chapter 16 covers charging).
- **Update your phone** and turn on **Bluetooth** and **Location**. Most trackers pair with your phone over Bluetooth during setup.
- **Pick one account email** for the whole family and write it on the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 28. Other family members will be invited later (Chapter 18), not given your password.

The steps, in order

1. Install the maker's app from the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android): **Fi**, **Tractive GPS** or **Halo**. Check the maker's name under the app so you get the real one.
2. Open the app and create an account with your email and a strong password.
3. Follow the prompts to add a new tracker or collar. The app may ask you to scan a code on the device or the box, or to hold the tracker close to your phone.
4. Choose and pay for the plan (Chapter 5). Note the renewal date before you leave this screen.
5. Fill in your pet's profile: name, photo, breed and weight. A clear, recent photo matters; it's what you'll share if your pet is ever missing.
6. Allow the app's **notifications** when your phone asks. Without them, escape alerts can't reach you.
7. Allow **Location** access, so the app can show you and your pet on the same map.
8. Set your home location and your first safe zone (Chapter 11).
9. Let the app install any firmware update for the tracker. Keep the tracker on its charger and near your Wi-Fi while it does.

TIP

Say yes to notifications

If you tapped "Don't Allow" by mistake, open your phone's **Settings**, find the tracker app in the list, and turn **Notifications** on. On an iPhone it's **Settings** > **Apps** > the app > **Notifications**.

A practice walk

Once setup is done, put the tracker on your pet (Chapter 10), and have someone walk the dog around the block while you watch the map at home. You'll see how quickly the dot moves, how accurate it is on your street, and whether an escape alert arrives when the dog leaves the safe zone. Ten minutes of practice now saves a lot of fumbling on a bad day.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A tracker that's fully set up, with notifications on and a test walk done, is ready the moment you need it. The middle of an escape is no time to be creating a password.

CHAPTER 10

A Safe, Comfortable Fit

A tracker only helps if it stays on your pet, and a collar should never hurt. A few minutes getting the fit right protects your pet's neck and keeps the tracker from being lost in the first bramble patch.

The two-finger check

A common rule of thumb from veterinarians and pet groups: you should be able to slide two fingers flat between the collar and your pet's neck. Tighter can rub and pinch. Looser can slip over the head or snag on branches and fences.

1. Put the collar on with the tracker attached, buckle it, and slide two fingers underneath.
2. Check that the tracker sits at the back or side of the neck where the maker says it should go, and doesn't spin around freely.
3. Gently try to pull the collar forward over the ears. It shouldn't come off.
4. Check again after a few minutes, once your pet has relaxed, and again after a week.
5. For a puppy or kitten, check every week or two; they grow fast.

Everyday care for the neck

- Look at the skin under the collar every few days, especially in summer or after swimming. Redness, hair loss or sores mean the fit or the collar needs changing; call your veterinarian if it doesn't clear up.
- Take a heavy tracker or training collar off at night if the maker suggests it, and while your pet is crated.
- Never attach a leash to a collar that's made to break away (Chapter 12).
- Keep the tracker off a collar used for tying out or chaining a dog.

Training collars like Halo

A collar that gives static cues has small metal contact points that touch the skin. Halo's help pages explain how to choose and fit its contact tips, and that its plain **Contact Blanks** are for sound and vibration only, with no static at all. If you're unsure, start with sound and vibration and talk with your veterinarian or a trainer.

STAY SAFE

Watch for discomfort

Scratching at the collar, a sore spot, or a pet who suddenly won't let you touch its neck is a sign to take the collar off and look. Pets can't tell us something hurts. A good fit is part of the job, not an extra.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A comfortable fit means your pet forgets it's wearing the tracker, and the tracker stays put on the day it's needed most.

CHAPTER 11

Safe Zones and Escape Alerts

This is the feature most families buy a GPS tracker for. You draw an area on a map, such as your house and yard. If your pet leaves that area, your phone gets an **escape alert**. Each maker uses its own name: Fi calls them **Safe Zones**, Tractive calls them **Virtual Fences**, and Halo calls them **fences**. The general word is **geofence**, which just means a fence drawn on a map.

Drawing a good safe zone

1. Open the app's map and find the option to add a safe zone or virtual fence.
2. Start at your house and drag the shape so it covers the yard your pet is allowed in.
3. Leave a little room at the edges. GPS is often off by several yards, so a zone that hugs the fence line exactly may send alerts while the dog is still inside.
4. Keep the zone off the busy road. If the road is the danger, the alert should come before the dog reaches it.
5. Save it, then turn on notifications for leaving (and, if offered, for returning).
6. Test it: walk the dog out of the zone on a leash and see how long the alert takes.

What each maker adds

Maker	What to know
Fi	Safe Zones send an alert when the dog leaves. Reviewers note the alert can take a few minutes, so a slightly smaller zone gives you a head start with an escape artist.
Tractive	Virtual Fences send an alert when the pet leaves or enters. Tractive recommends also setting a **Power Saving Zone** around your home to avoid false alerts there and save battery. Only the account owner can create or change fences and zones.
Halo	Fences are part of the containment system. The number allowed depends on the plan: up to 5 on Bronze, 20 on Silver, unlimited on Gold.

Alerts at night and when you're away

Check that your phone's **Do Not Disturb** or **Focus** setting lets the tracker app through, or you may sleep through an alert. On an iPhone, open **Settings** > **Focus**, pick the focus you use, and add the tracker app to the apps that are allowed to notify you. On Android, look for **Do Not Disturb** in **Settings** (often under **Notifications** or **Sound**) and add the app as an exception.

TIP

One zone for each place

Add a second zone for a place your pet stays often, like a son's or daughter's house or the cabin. The alert then makes sense wherever you are.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

An escape alert turns a long, frightening search into a short walk down the road, because you know within minutes that the dog is out, and which way he went.

CHAPTER 12

Cats: Breakaway Collars and Light Trackers

Cats climb, squeeze under decks and slip through hedges. A collar that can't come off can catch on a branch or fence and trap or choke a cat. That's why cat trackers are built differently, and why you should never simply move a dog collar onto a cat.

Why breakaway matters

A **breakaway collar** has a clasp that pops open if the cat's weight pulls on it, such as when the collar snags. The cat goes free; the collar (and the tracker) may be left behind. That's the right trade. A lost tracker can be replaced. A cat caught by the neck can't wait.

Tractive CAT 6 Mini

The Tractive CAT 6 Mini comes on its own breakaway collar, and replacements must be the CAT 6 Mini's own collar. Tractive's help pages give these steps:

1. Before fitting, set the breakaway buckle: slide the red slider on the clasp to the setting nearest your cat's weight (the settings are marked XL, L, M and S).
2. Fit the collar with the two-finger check (Chapter 10).
3. Let your cat wear it for short periods at first, and slowly make the time longer.
4. Check the collar regularly. Replace it if it's frayed, stretched or the breakaway clasp looks damaged, or if it no longer fits.

Fi Mini and other small trackers

Fi's smaller **Fi Mini** was introduced for cats and small dogs. Whatever brand you look at, check the maker's weight range for the cat version before you buy. Pages sometimes give different ranges, so if your cat is small, ask the maker or your veterinarian before you buy.

Tips for cat families

- Most cats are inside more than out. Set a home zone (or Tractive's Power Saving Zone) so the battery isn't spent while she's napping on the sofa.
- GPS works poorly indoors and under decks. A cat hiding in the garage may show as "near home" for a while. Use the tracker's light or sound, if it has one, to find her up close.

- Expect the collar to come off now and then. That means the breakaway is doing its job. A Bluetooth tag in a small holder is not a substitute; it's heavier than you'd think for a cat and has the battery risks in Chapter 6.
- Indoor-only cats still benefit from a **microchip**, since they're the ones most likely to panic and hide if they ever slip out (Chapter 20).

STAY SAFE

Never use a non-breakaway collar on a cat

If a tracker for cats doesn't come with a breakaway collar, or the breakaway has been taped or glued shut, don't use it. And never clip a leash to a breakaway collar; use a harness made for cats.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The right cat tracker on a breakaway collar gives you a way to find a wandering cat without putting her at risk while she explores.

PART 4

Everyday Use

Live tracking and lost mode, alerts you can trust, the history and activity screens, battery and charging, coverage, and sharing with family and pet sitters.

CHAPTER 13

Live Tracking and Lost Mode

Most of the time a GPS tracker checks in only every so often, to save battery. When your pet is missing, you want the opposite: a dot that moves on the map as the pet moves. That's what **live tracking** and **lost mode** are for.

How each maker does it

Maker	What it's called	What happens
Fi	**Lost Mode**	Live tracking every few seconds. Fi says a full battery lasts about 2 days in Lost Mode. You can share a **Search Party** link so helpers can see the live location.
Tractive	**LIVE** tracking	Location updates every 2 to 3 seconds. To save battery, LIVE turns off after 5 minutes of not being used; you can change that time.
Halo	Live map	The map shows the collar's location. Keeping the live map open for long periods uses more battery.

Using it when your pet is missing

1. Open the app and turn on Lost Mode or LIVE tracking right away.
2. Note the battery level. If it's low, write down the latest location in case the battery runs out.
3. Before you set off, tell someone at home where you're going and take your phone charger or a power bank.
4. Follow the map on foot or by car. Stop now and then to let the dot catch up.
5. When you're close, call your pet's name calmly and use the tracker's light or sound if it has one.
6. Once your pet is safe, turn Lost Mode or LIVE off so the battery isn't drained.

HEADS UP

Don't chase into danger

Live tracking can lead you toward a busy road, a creek or someone's property. Let the dot guide you, but stay safe: watch for traffic, ask permission before entering private land, and never chase a scared dog toward a road. A frightened dog often runs farther when chased.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Live tracking shows you where your pet is right now, not where it was an hour ago, so you can go straight there instead of searching street by street.

CHAPTER 14

Alerts That Don't Cry Wolf

A tracker that alerts you every time the dog lies down at the edge of the yard soon gets ignored, and then the real escape alert gets ignored too. A little tuning makes the alerts trustworthy.

Why false alerts happen

- **GPS drift.** Near houses, tall trees or metal barns, GPS can wander by several yards, so a dog asleep on the porch can briefly "leave" a tight zone.
- **A zone that's too tight.** Drawn right on the fence line, it leaves no room for drift (Chapter 11).
- **Indoors.** GPS signals are weak inside, so the location can jump around while your pet sleeps.
- **Low battery or poor cell signal.** Updates arrive late, and the alert may come in bursts.

How to calm them down

1. Give the safe zone a little more room around the house and yard.
2. With Tractive, add a **Power Saving Zone** around your home. Inside it the tracker stops reporting GPS positions, so it sends no fence alerts there and saves a lot of battery. (LIVE tracking, light and sound pause there too, until the tracker leaves the zone.)
3. Keep the tracker charged; a low battery causes late and odd updates.
4. Check the app for a firmware update.
5. If alerts still seem wrong, write down the time and what your pet was doing, and contact the maker's support. Those details help them help you.

TIP

Treat every alert as real until you've looked

Even after tuning, take a moment to look out the window or check the map whenever an alert arrives. It takes ten seconds, and the one time it's real, you'll be glad you did.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Alerts you can trust mean you can relax while the dog is in the yard, and act fast when he's not.

CHAPTER 15

Location History, Activity and Health Screens

Besides the live map, tracker apps keep a record of where your pet has been, and many also count activity such as walks, rest and sleep. You don't have to use any of it, but some of it is handy.

Location history

The history screen shows a line or a set of dots for where your pet went during the day. Families use it to find out where a cat roams at night, or how a dog got out of the yard. Tractive calls this **Location History**, and family members you share with can see it too (Chapter 18).

Activity and sleep

Many trackers count steps or active minutes and show sleep or rest, a bit like a fitness band for people. The numbers are best used to spot a change over time. A dog who is suddenly much less active, or restless every night, may be telling you something.

HEADS UP

A tracker is not a veterinarian

Activity and health screens are a nudge, not a diagnosis. If you see a sudden change, or your pet seems unwell, call your veterinarian. Don't wait for an app to tell you something is wrong.

Privacy at home

A tracker's history also shows where *you* walk the dog every day. Share access only with people you trust, remove people who no longer need it, and use a strong password on the account.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A quick look at the history answers questions like "where does she go all night?" and "how does he keep getting out?" so you can fix the gap in the fence.

CHAPTER 16

Battery and Charging

A GPS tracker with a dead battery is just a decoration. Charging is the one chore that comes with every tracker, and how often depends a lot on the brand and how you use it.

How long a charge lasts, as the makers describe it

Tracker	Maker's figure	Good to know
Fi Series 3+	Up to 3 months	Varies with activity and time away from home. Lost Mode: about 2 days. Charges only on the Fi Base, about 3 hours from empty to full.
Fi Mini	A matter of weeks	Check Fi's current battery page for your model.
Tractive DOG 6	Up to 2 weeks with a Power Saving Zone; up to 6 days without	Frequent LIVE tracking drains it much faster.
Halo Collar 5	Up to 48 hours	Halo recommends charging every night so each day starts full. Recharges in about one to two hours.

Good charging habits

1. Pick one charging spot and one time, such as the kitchen counter during breakfast or every night at bedtime.
2. Use the charger or cable that came with the tracker. Halo suggests a 20 to 25 watt USB-C power block.
3. Keep the charging port clean and dry, and close any port cover after charging.
4. Turn on the app's low-battery alert, and charge as soon as it arrives.
5. Don't let it run all the way to zero as a habit. Halo, for one, advises against it.
6. Before a trip, a storm or a visit from the grandkids (open doors!), top it up to full.

TIP

While it charges

While the tracker charges, your pet is without it. If your dog is an escape artist, charge it while he's inside with you, and keep the regular collar with his ID tag on at all times.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A simple charging routine means the tracker is ready on the one day it matters, instead of blinking red in a drawer.

CHAPTER 17

Coverage, Range and Where GPS Struggles

"Range" means something different for each kind of tracker. A Bluetooth tag reaches only a short distance to a nearby phone. A GPS tracker has no range limit of its own, but it needs two things: a view of the sky for GPS, and a cell signal to send the location to your phone.

Where GPS trackers work well

- Open yards, fields and neighborhoods with decent cell service.
- Along roads and in towns, where cell towers are close together.

Where they struggle

- **Indoors, under decks and in barns.** GPS signals are weak, so the location may be off or out of date.
- **Deep woods and valleys.** Heavy tree cover and hills can block both GPS and cell signals.
- **Dead spots.** If your phone often has no bars somewhere, the tracker probably won't either, and its updates may be late or missing there.

Checking coverage before you buy

1. Look for the maker's coverage map or country checker on its website.
2. Type in your home address and the places you visit with your pet.
3. Ask the maker which cell network the tracker uses, and compare that with how your own phone does there.
4. Buy within the money-back period (Chapter 5) and test it at home and on your usual walks.

GOOD TO KNOW

Satellite trackers are arriving

News reports in 2026 describe Fi's new **Fi Ultra** as able to use Starlink satellites where there's no cell signal, in the United States only. That may help in very rural areas. As with any new technology, check the maker's current details and plan cost before buying.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Checking coverage first means you won't pay for a tracker that goes quiet in the very fields and woods where your dog likes to roam.

CHAPTER 18

Sharing with Family, Walkers and Sitters

A tracker is most useful when the right people can see it: your spouse, the grown children, the dog walker, or a neighbor who feeds the cat when you travel. Never share your password. Every app has a proper way to invite people, and you can remove them later.

Fi

1. In the Fi app, tap your picture, open the menu, then **Your Pack** and **People**.
2. Invite the person and choose their access: **Full Access** (for household members and other owners), **View Only** (can see the location on the map) or **Restricted** (can't see the location).
3. For a short-term helper, you can instead send a location link from the live map card. They don't need a Fi account to view it. Tap **End Location Sharing** when you're done.

Tractive

1. Family Sharing needs a Tractive **Premium** plan on the owner's account.
2. Open your pet's profile, go to **Family Members**, and send an invite. The person creates a free Tractive account. There's no limit on how many people you can add.
3. Family members can see the location, LIVE tracking and Location History, and use the light and sound. Only the owner can change Virtual Fences and Power Saving Zones.
4. For someone without an account, such as neighbors helping in a search, **Public Sharing** sends a link that shows only the current location.

Bluetooth tags

An AirTag can be shared with up to five people in the Find My app, and Google's Find Hub lets you share a tag with up to ten. Our Bluetooth Trackers guide has the steps.

> **TIP**
>
> **Make a sitter sheet**
>
> For a pet sitter, write down: the app's name, how to open the live map, your vet's number, the microchip number, and your cell number. Tape it inside a kitchen cabinet while you're away.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

With sharing set up, a sitter or family member can act on an escape alert right away, even when you're out of town or asleep.

PART 5

When a Pet Goes Missing

A calm plan for the first hour, why the microchip still matters, local help in Portage County, and the scams that target worried owners.

CHAPTER 19

The First Hour: Your Lost-Pet Plan

When a pet goes missing, it's hard to think straight. Read this chapter now, on a calm day, so the steps are familiar if you ever need them. Even with a tracker, the old-fashioned steps still matter, because batteries die and collars come off.

Right away

1. Take a breath. Check the house first: closets, under beds, the garage, the basement, behind the dryer. Cats especially hide close to home.
2. Open the tracker app and turn on **Lost Mode** or **LIVE** tracking (Chapter 13).
3. If you use a Bluetooth tag, open Find My or Find Hub and mark it as lost, so a finder can see your contact details (Chapter 7).
4. Share the live link with family and neighbors who can help search (Chapter 18).
5. Walk or drive the area calmly, calling your pet's name. Bring a favorite treat, a squeaky toy or the food bag your pet knows the sound of.

Within the first few hours

1. Call your county dog warden and local shelters, and give them your pet's description and microchip number (Chapter 21).
2. Call the microchip registry and report your pet missing. Check that your phone number on file is current (Chapter 20).
3. Call your veterinarian's office and nearby animal hospitals, in case someone brings your pet in.
4. Post on neighborhood groups such as Nextdoor, with a clear photo, where and when your pet went missing, and a phone number. Leave out details only you would know, such as a scar or a missing tooth, so you can check a caller's story (Chapter 22).
5. Put out simple paper flyers at corners, the post office and the feed store: a big photo, "LOST DOG" or "LOST CAT," and your phone number.

If your pet is still missing tonight

- Leave something with your scent, like a worn sweatshirt, and your pet's bed by the door.
- Check shelters in person every day or two. Descriptions over the phone can miss a match.

- Keep your phone charged and nearby, and answer unknown numbers, but read Chapter 22 first.
- Charge a spare power bank for your phone. A long search with the live map open drains a phone too.

TIP

Make your lost-pet kit today

Save two or three clear, recent photos of your pet in a phone album called "Lost pet," and write the microchip number, registry phone and vet's number on the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 28.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Having a plan written down turns panic into action. Every step you've practiced is one you don't have to figure out with your heart in your throat.

CHAPTER 20

Microchips Still Matter

A **microchip** is a tiny chip, about the size of a grain of rice, that a veterinarian places under the skin. It has no battery and doesn't track location. When a shelter or vet scans it, it shows a number. That number is looked up in a **registry**, which has your contact details. A tracker can fall off or go flat; a microchip is always there.

The catch: the registry must be current

A chip is only as good as the phone number behind it. If you've moved, changed phones, adopted a pet whose chip was registered to someone else, or never registered at all, a finder can't reach you.

Check your pet's chip in five minutes

1. Find the microchip number. It's often on adoption papers or vet records, or your vet can scan your pet.
2. On your phone or computer, search for the **AAHA Universal Pet Microchip Lookup** (from the American Animal Hospital Association) and type in the number.
3. It shows which registries have that chip on file, with their phone number, website, and the date the record was last updated.
4. Contact that registry to log in, check your details, and update your phone number and address. The AAHA tool itself can't change your record.
5. If nothing comes up, contact the company that made the chip, or ask your vet to help you register it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some registries close

AAHA notes that at least one registry, Save This Life, has shut down. If your chip was registered there, ask your veterinarian for your records and register with another company.

ID tags and the dog license

- A simple ID tag with your cell number is still the fastest way for a neighbor to reach you.
- In Ohio, dogs three months and older need a license each year (the deadline is January 31). In Portage County, the Auditor's office sells licenses, and a found dog's county tag can be looked up online (Chapter 21).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Five minutes updating the registry means that if your pet ever ends up at a shelter or vet across the county, the call comes to your phone.

CHAPTER 21

Local Help: Dog Warden, Shelters and Neighbors

Technology helps, but people find most lost pets. Here in Portage County, these are the places to call and check. Wherever you live, your county will have something similar.

Portage County Dog Warden's Office & Shelter

The county runs a dog warden's office and shelter in Ravenna. Stray dogs that are picked up or turned in often go there. Its page on the county website, **portagecounty-oh.gov**, has the current phone number and hours; look up and write the number on your Cheat-Sheet now, so you're not searching for it in a hurry.

The shelter also posts found dogs on **Petfinder** with "Looking for owner" in the listing, so it's worth checking there as well as calling and visiting.

Look up a found dog's county tag

If you find a dog wearing a Portage County license tag, the Auditor's website (**portagecountyauditor.org**) has a free **Dog Tag Search**. Type the tag number to find the owner's contact. Questions about licenses go to the Auditor's dog license line, **(330) 297-3560**.

Other places to check

- Local humane groups and rescues, such as the **Portage Animal Protective League** (Portage APL).
- Shelters in neighboring counties, if you live near a county line or your pet may have traveled.
- Your veterinarian and nearby animal hospitals.
- Neighborhood groups such as **Nextdoor**, and local lost-and-found pet pages. Our Nextdoor guide covers how to post a lost or found pet.
- Your mail carrier, school bus driver and neighbors who walk dogs. They see a lot.

TIP

Write the numbers down today

On the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 28 there's space for the dog warden, your vet, the nearest emergency animal hospital and the microchip registry. Filling it in takes ten minutes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing exactly who to call, and having the numbers ready, gets your pet's description in front of the right people within the first hour.

CHAPTER 22

Lost-Pet Scams

It's a sad truth: some people watch lost-pet posts and flyers, then contact worried owners to steal money or take over their accounts. Police departments, state attorneys general and the Better Business Bureau have all warned about these. Knowing the patterns protects you at a moment when you're most likely to trust anyone who says, "I found your dog."

The common tricks

- **The verification code.** A caller or texter says they found your pet, but first wants to be sure you're the real owner, so they send you a six-digit code and ask you to read it back. That code is really a sign-in or account-setup code, often to create a Google Voice number in your name or to get into one of your accounts.
- **The reward up front.** They want the reward sent first by payment app, gift card or wire, sometimes with a threat to harm the pet if you don't pay.
- **The "shipping" or "vet bill" story.** They say your pet was taken far away and they need money for transport or a vet bill before returning it.
- **The vague finder.** They can't describe your pet beyond what was in your post, and won't send a photo or video taken today.

SCAM ALERT

Never share a code, never pay first

No real finder needs a verification code from your phone. Never read one to anyone. Never send money, gift cards or payment-app transfers before your pet is safely back in your arms. Arrange any meeting in a public place, or through the police, animal control or a shelter.

How to check a caller

1. Ask them to describe something not in your post, like a marking, a scar or the color of the collar.
2. Ask for a photo or short video of your pet taken right now.
3. Offer to meet at a police station, the shelter or a busy store parking lot, with a family member along.
4. If they refuse or push for money or a code, hang up. You haven't lost anything.

If you already shared a code or paid

1. If you read a code aloud, change the password on the account it came from (Google, your email, your bank) and turn on two-step verification.
2. If you paid, call your bank or card company right away, and report it to the payment app.
3. Report the scam to the Federal Trade Commission at **reportfraud.ftc.gov**, and tell the police.
4. Then call Bill if you'd like help checking your accounts (Chapter 27).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing these tricks ahead of time keeps a terrible day from getting worse, and keeps your money and accounts safe while you search.

PART 6

Money, Changes and Fixes

Fake tracker ads, canceling a plan, travel and passing a tracker on, and what to do when something isn't working.

CHAPTER 23

Fake Tracker Ads and Look-Alikes

Scroll social media for long and you'll see ads for amazing pet trackers: "Real GPS, no monthly fee, works anywhere, 80 percent off today only." Some are cheap Bluetooth tags dressed up as GPS. Some are from fake stores that take your money and send nothing.

Warning signs

- **"GPS with no subscription, works anywhere."** A tracker that sends its location over the cell network needs cell service, and someone pays for it. If there's no plan, it's almost always a Bluetooth tag (Chapter 2).
- **Huge discounts and countdown timers** pushing you to buy right now.
- **A website you've never heard of**, often brand new, with no phone number or real address.
- **Payment only by gift card, wire, cryptocurrency or a payment app**, instead of a credit card.
- **Copied photos** of a well-known brand's tracker with a different name.
- **Reviews that all sound the same**, or no reviews outside the seller's own site.

Buying safely

1. Buy from the maker's own website or a large store you already know.
2. Type the website address yourself instead of tapping the ad.
3. Pay with a credit card, which gives you the best protection if something goes wrong.
4. Check the app in the App Store or Google Play before you buy. A real tracker has a real app with many reviews from the same company.

SCAM ALERT

Fake stores and too-good deals

If an ad for a tracker seems too good to be true, it probably is. Fake online stores use social-media ads, deep discounts and payment methods you can't reverse. If you've paid one, call your card company right away and report it at **reportfraud.ftc.gov**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A few seconds of doubt before you tap "Buy" keeps you from losing money on a tracker that never arrives, or that can't do what the ad promised.

CHAPTER 24

Canceling a Subscription

Maybe your pet has passed on, you've switched brands, or the plan just isn't worth it anymore. Canceling is usually done on the maker's website rather than in the app, and the rules about refunds differ. Here's how each one works, as of November 2026.

Fi

1. On a computer or phone browser, go to **memberships.fitracking.com/manage** and sign in.
2. Choose **Pause or Cancel**. Only the primary owner on the account can cancel.
3. If you'd rather take a break, you can pause for 1, 2 or 3 months. The pause starts on your next billing date, and you're not charged during it.
4. Know the rules: if your plan has a commitment period (the Series 3+ has at least 6 months), you can cancel only once it's complete. Fi doesn't give partial refunds in the middle of a membership.

Tractive

1. Sign in at **my.tractive.com**.
2. Open **Trackers & Subscription Plans**, choose the tracker, then **Subscription Plan**, and pick the cancel option. If the plan is paused, resume it first.
3. Canceling turns off auto-renewal; the plan keeps working until the end of the period you paid for.
4. Want money back? Refunds are only for plans bought or renewed in the last 30 days, and you ask through **Subscription Plan** > **More Actions** > **Claim Refund**. Canceling by itself doesn't refund.
5. If you bought the plan through Google Play, cancel it in the Play Store's **Subscriptions** list instead.

Halo

1. Sign in to your account on the Halo website.
2. Choose **Pause or Cancel Plan**. Halo shows pause options first; continue to cancel if that's what you want.

3. Halo's terms say monthly plans can be canceled or downgraded at the end of the billing cycle.
4. If you're returning a collar, cancel the membership too, so the monthly charges stop.

Bought through the App Store?

If a plan was bought through your iPhone, cancel it in **Settings** > tap your name > **Subscriptions**. On Android, open the **Play Store**, tap your profile picture, then **Payments & subscriptions** > **Subscriptions**.

TIP

Get it in writing

After you cancel, look for a confirmation email and keep it. Check your next card statement. If a charge still appears, call the maker's support with the confirmation in hand.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the rules before you cancel saves you from paying for months you didn't want, and from being surprised by a commitment period.

CHAPTER 25

Travel, New Phones and Passing a Tracker On

Life changes: a road trip, a new phone, a new pet, or a pet who has passed. A few small steps keep your tracker working, or let it go cleanly.

Traveling with your pet

- Charge the tracker fully before you leave and pack its charger or base.
- Add a safe zone for the place you're staying (Chapter 11).
- Check the maker's coverage for where you're going, especially if you're leaving the country; some plans only work in certain countries or cost more abroad.
- New places frighten pets. Keep the leash on outdoors, and check the collar fit before every outing.

Getting a new phone

1. Install the tracker app on the new phone and sign in with the same email and password.
2. Allow notifications and location again; these don't always carry over.
3. Test an alert by walking the dog out of the safe zone.

Passing a tracker on, or after a pet has passed

1. Cancel or transfer the plan first (Chapter 24).
2. Remove the tracker from your account in the app, so the next owner can set it up. Halo, for example, explains how to **unlink** a collar before someone else uses it.
3. For an AirTag or other Bluetooth tag, remove it from Find My or Find Hub before giving it away.
4. Update the microchip registry if the pet goes to a new home.

GOOD TO KNOW

Take your time

If you've lost a pet you loved, there's no hurry to deal with the tracker or the plan. When you're ready, a family member or Bill can sit with you and cancel it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

These small steps keep the tracker reliable through life's changes, and stop charges for a plan you no longer need.

CHAPTER 26

When Something Isn't Working

Most tracker problems have simple causes. Try these in order before you call for help.

The location is old or not updating

1. Check the battery level in the app. Charge it if it's low.
2. Check that the plan is active. An expired card can quietly stop the service.
3. Take the pet outside with a view of the sky for a few minutes; GPS is weak indoors.
4. Check your own phone's internet connection, then close and reopen the app.
5. Restart the tracker, if the maker's help pages explain how.

No escape alerts

1. Check that the tracker app's notifications are on in your phone's settings (Chapter 9).
2. Check Do Not Disturb or Focus (Chapter 11).
3. Check that the safe zone is saved and alerts for leaving are turned on.
4. With Tractive, remember there are no fence alerts while the tracker is inside a Power Saving Zone.

It won't charge

1. Clean the charging contacts or port gently with a dry cloth.
2. Try the original cable and a different wall outlet or power block.
3. Make sure it's not too hot or cold; some trackers won't charge outside a set temperature range.
4. Contact the maker's support; batteries do wear out, and replacement may be covered.

The app won't sign in

Use the app's **Forgot password** link, and check your email (including the spam folder) for the reset message. Never give your password to someone who calls or texts saying they're from the tracker company.

SCAM ALERT

Support calls you didn't ask for

Real tracker companies don't call you out of the blue to fix your account or ask for a code or a gift card. If someone does, hang up and contact the maker through its official website or app.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Working through these quick checks fixes most problems in minutes, without a long wait on hold.

PART 7

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary to keep near the charger.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can choose, set up and live with a pet tracker on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves time and worry. Here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Before you buy**: going through the checklist in Chapter 8 together, and comparing the real cost of each plan (Chapter 5).
- **Setting up the app**, notifications, safe zones and a test walk on your own phone (Chapter 9 and Chapter 11).
- **Sharing with family or a pet sitter**, so the right people get alerts (Chapter 18).
- **Checking a found-pet caller or an ad** that doesn't feel right (Chapter 22 and Chapter 23).
- **Canceling a plan** or checking a charge you don't recognize (Chapter 24).
- **You'd simply rather have a patient person handle it.** That's always a good enough reason.

What I don't do

I'm not a veterinarian or a dog trainer. Questions about your pet's health, behavior, or whether a training collar is right for your dog belong with your vet or a trainer. I'm happy to handle the technology side.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace: no rushing, no talking down, no jargon. This guide pairs with my **Device Training** service, where we sit down with your own phone and go through the app until you're comfortable. Home visits are here in Portage County, Ohio; remote help reaches you wherever you are. I bring more than 30 years of professional experience with technology.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is free to read and share with family and neighbors.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may be greeted by Sophie

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might first meet **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. The actual help always comes from me.

Thank you for taking the time to look after your four-legged family. A little setup now goes a long way on the day it matters.

— Bill

CHAPTER 28

Your Pet Tracker Cheat-Sheet

Keep a copy of this near the tracker's charger. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

Remember	
GPS tracker	Fi, Tractive, Halo: satellites plus its own cell service. Needs a paid plan.
Bluetooth tag	AirTag, SmartTag, Tile: found by nearby phones. Not made for pets.
Safe zone	Draw it with a little room to spare. Test it with a leashed walk.
Lost Mode / LIVE	Turn it on the moment your pet is missing; turn it off once found.
Charging	Same spot, same time. Top it up before trips and busy days.
Cats	Breakaway collar only. Never a leash on a breakaway collar.
Microchip	Check the registry has your current phone number (AAHA lookup).
Scams	Never read a code to a finder. Never pay before your pet is back.
Canceling	Usually on the maker's website. Check commitment and refund rules.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Tracker brand and model	_____
App account email	_____
Plan, cost and renewal date	_____
Microchip number	_____
Microchip registry and phone	_____
Dog license tag number	_____
Veterinarian (name and phone)	_____
Emergency animal hospital	_____
County dog warden / shelter phone	_____
People sharing the tracker	_____
Maker's support (phone or website)	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Pet missing: check the house, then turn on Lost Mode or LIVE tracking (Chapter 13 and Chapter 19).
2. Call the dog warden, shelters, your vet and the microchip registry (Chapter 20 and Chapter 21).
3. Someone says they found your pet: no codes, no money first, meet in public (Chapter 22).
4. Location not updating: check the battery, the plan, and take the pet outside (Chapter 26).
5. No alerts: check notifications, Do Not Disturb and the safe zone (Chapter 11).
6. Sore neck or rubbing: take the collar off and call your veterinarian if it doesn't clear (Chapter 10).
7. Still stuck: call Bill at **(330) 200-8042**.