



Montgomery County Department of Police

Autism/ID/Alzheimer's Wandering Prevention Safety Tips

INSTALL AN ALARM OF SOME TYPE-

Many times, caregivers are not aware that the loved one has left the home, especially during the evening hours when "sundowning" (waking at all hours of the night) is common. An alarm is also important during the day when caregivers may be distracted. If you can not afford a professionally installed alarm, magnetic door alarms are a good option as well. They are inexpensive and readily available. The alarm is attached with strong tape or a screw to either side of a door frame. When the connections are separated (door opening) it gives off a high decibel alarm. They can be set to chime during hours when a door may be opened more frequently.

DON'T HESITATE TO CALL 911, DON'T WAIT

In some instances, families will search for their missing loved ones alone and feel as if they can't call 911 for assistance. If you are searching beyond your yard, call 911. If the loved one is located soon after you call, just call back and let us know. Waiting to call 911 could lead to tragic results. Have a "script" prepared with pertinent information to relay to 911 call takers and responding officers. If your Autistic loved one will go into bodies of water, please notify the 911 operator.

IDENTIFICATION

Make sure that the loved one has some type of identification on them at all times. Writing contact information in permanent ink on as much clothing as possible is a good, cheap idea. However, an ID bracelet is the best option, the rubber or silicone types are the best option. MCPD encourages families of individuals with Autism to have the wearer show the bracelet to officers in the community when feasible. This act creates an encounter with law enforcement when the wearer is not under stress. It can reinforce the idea that law enforcement are here to assist when needed. It also makes the officer aware of those with Autism that live in the area they work. The familiarization is so important for both the wearer and the officer.

INFORMING

We encourage informing neighbors of the situation, if you feel comfortable doing so. We understand that some caregivers might not feel comfortable letting neighbors know that there is an issue. However, a tragedy may be prevented by making them aware of the potential dangers of your loved one wandering alone. You can provide the neighbors with a contact person's cell phone or request they call 911 in the event they think the loved one is in need of assistance.

CONSIDER SWIM LESSONS

For caregivers of children with Autism, teaching your child to swim early could absolutely save their life!

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