



## **Important Water Safety Information for People with Autism**

Montgomery County Police want you to know that people with autism are often attracted to water sources such as swimming pools, ponds, and lakes, and may gravitate towards bodies of water when they wander. Drowning is the number one cause of premature death for individuals with autism. When officers search for missing children with autism they will immediately search any nearby bodies of water.

A caregiver/parent can take steps to prevent wandering and can make preparations in case their loved one does wander:

- Make every effort to make it difficult for your loved one to wander. Install an alarm if possible.
- Reach out to neighbors for support. Examples of neighbor letters can be found on the MCP [Project Lifesaver](#) page.
- **Create a 911 script** – information that will be helpful to emergency responders should your child wander. Include a Google map of the area showing bodies of water. Do not hesitate to tell officers about the dangers of drowning.
- Make sure the loved one has identification on them at all times.
- Take a full-length photo and head-shot of your loved one. Store the photos electronically so that if the person wanders, the photos can be sent to law enforcement quickly.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately if your loved one has wandered so that police can respond.

Caregivers, community members, and officers can all work together to prevent wandering and ensure that individuals are quickly located if they do wander. For more information or for assistance in dealing with wandering, please contact Officer Laurie Reyes via e-mail at : [Laurie.Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Laurie.Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov).

More information can be found on the Police Department's website at:  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/resource/lifesaver.html>

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