

WANDERING: Keeping Loved Ones Safe

The Need for Registries & Rapid Response Programs for Individuals with Special Needs

People living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia and children with autism are at increased risk for wandering.

SCOPE & IMPACT

What is wandering?

Changes in the brain causing a person with dementia to become confused and disoriented, unable to find their way.

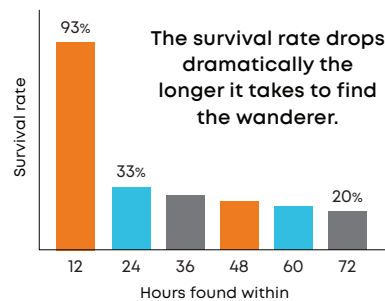


Although wandering is more common in the middle or later stages of dementia, it can occur at any point during the disease.

In fact...
60%

of people with Alzheimer's practice wandering behavior
That's 3 million per year!

Why is it so dangerous?



The survival rate drops dramatically the longer it takes to find the wanderer.

An Alzheimer's patient who wanders outside alone can easily become lost, confused, injured, and even die from exposure to harsh weather or other safety risks.

A typical search and rescue operation can cause taxpayers \$1,500 per hour, with low-tech operations averaging 9 hours. That is an average of \$13,500 per search and rescue effort.

Wandering is unpredictable and unexpected. The most common wandering mode is walking, followed by driving in public transportation.



50% of children with autism wander away from safety.

90% of wandering deaths are drowning related.

Check all bodies of water first!

myautismally.org

When a person goes missing:

72%
were found alive by the next day

Of those found in 2 days, only
51%
survived

If missing for 3-5 days, only
30%
survived

SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRY BEST PRACTICES



WHAT IS A REGISTRY?

- Voluntary photo-based information system hosted by the county's Sheriff's Department
- Designed to assist Law Enforcement during contacts with members of the community who have disabilities
- Information can be disseminated to all field units as helpful broadcast information

FEATURES

- Emergency contact information
- Detailed physical descriptions
- Physical address
- A photograph of the individual
- Known routines, favorite attractions
- Special needs of the individual
- Automated semi-annual or annual email reminder to those registered to update information



EXISTING PROGRAMS

- **San Diego County Take Me Home:** sdsheriff.gov/community/take-me-home-registry
- **Orange County Take Me Home:** ocsheriff.gov/community/take-me-home-program
- **San Bernardino County Safe Return:** wp.sbcounty.gov/sheriff/safe-return-program
- **Sacramento County Take Me Home Safely:** sacsheriff.com/pages/take_me_home_safely.php
- **San Mateo County Project Guardian:** smcsheriff.com/project-guardian
- **Riverside County Special Needs Reunification:** riversidesheriff.org/768/Special-Needs-Reunification-Program
- **Madera County Operation Lost & Found:** maderacounty.com/government/sheriff/search-rescue/operation-lost-and-found#:~:text=OLF%20is%20overseen%20by%20a,in%20case%20they%20go%20missing
- **Los Angeles County Special Alert:** lasd.org/specialalert

RAPID RESPONSE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS BEST PRACTICES

What is a Rapid Response Program?

Search and rescue program strategically designed for “at risk” individuals who are prone to the life threatening behavior of wandering



FEATURES

- Wide variety of technology that counties are exploring for at risk individuals including, but not limited to:
Wearable GPS tracking devices
- Specially equipped team to assist with search and rescue
- Training for 911 dispatchers & law enforcement

California Counties With Special Needs Registry and/or Rapid Response Program

- No registry or rapid response program
- Rapid response program only
- Rapid response program & registry
- Registry only

