



## Project Lifesaver International

### Reduce the Risk of Wandering Home Safety Checklist



The Alzheimer's Association® estimates that as many as 60% of Alzheimer's patients wander away from home at some point in the disease process. Even if your loved one has never wandered before, it doesn't mean they won't. Project Lifesaver International™, in conjunction with Mara Botonis, Author of "When Caring Takes Courage" have partnered to provide the community with the "Reduce the Risk of Wandering Home Safety Checklist" It is not possible to completely prevent the risk of wandering. Caregivers are encouraged to consider the steps below to improve home safety.

Use visual cues featuring pictures and words. Persons with Alzheimer's/Dementia often forget where they are, even inside their own home. Visual reminders can provide needed clues and trigger memories. Use photos on the doors to bathroom, and kitchen & "STOP" signs at exits.	Install alarms. There are many wandering prevention alarms on the market that can alert you that your loved one is trying to exit, including sensors and motion detectors. A string of bells placed on/around certain windows and doorknobs can also alert you to their opening.
Provide a safe place to walk and wander within your home or fenced yard for pacing, or exploration. Create a circular route or path by eliminating obstacles and trip hazards (such as high pile rugs, protruding furniture, sharp objects) and inadequate lighting.	Search the many specialty catalogs and websites that feature caregiving products created for Alzheimer's patients, such as motion detectors, electronic beepers, special latches, etc. Use key words, such as "Alzheimer's Supplies" and Alzheimer's Safety" in your online search.
Use a towel, piece of fabric or cloth (usually fastened with Velcro or rubber band) to "wrap" your door knob in to better disguise it and make it harder to turn.	Install safety devices obtained from your local hardware store on all windows, limiting how far the windows can be opened. Place a fence around the house with a lockable gate if possible.
Install wandering-prevention locks such as deadbolts that require a key. Install locks on doors, windows and gates. These locks should require complex maneuvers, thus making it difficult for Alzheimer's/Dementia patients to leave.	In addition to wandering on foot, persons with Alzheimer's or Dementia might attempt to drive. Hide keys to cars and doors out of sight, keep vehicles locked at all times and leave extra keys with trusted neighbors or nearby relatives versus keeping them around your house.
Disguise exits and escape routes. Camouflaging doors and windows inhibits persons with Alzheimer's or Dementia in their ability to find a way out. Paint doors the same color as walls, or hang curtains on windows that match the color of walls to make exits less visible. Place an end table, bookcase, framed picture or large mural in front of the least used doors or windows.	Create a list of both dangerous and favorite places in your neighborhood that you think your loved one may be. Include such locations as busy crossroads, creeks, bridges, wooded areas, drainage ditches, and/or steep terrain. Include places where your loved one likes to go, or may be trying to get to such as a previous hometown, local restaurant, shopping center, place of worship, park etc.
Keep a recent photo and detailed physical description of your loved one readily available as well as neighbor phone #' to aid in a search.	Let neighbors know that your loved one may wander. Ask them to notify you if your loved one is unaccompanied outside your comfort zone.

### In the Event of Wandering

- 1. Notify the police. Call 911 or your community's equivalent.**
- 2. If your loved one is enrolled, call Project Lifesaver at: 1-877-580-5433.**
- 3. Let authorities know that you will begin a search of areas in and around your home, yard and neighborhood immediately and will inform them if you find your loved one.**