

## Quick Tips for First Responders



Be ready with the right response in situations involving a person with dementia.

### FOR ALL CASES

#### Use the TALK Tactics

- T**ake it slow.
- A**sk simple questions.
- L**imit reality checks.
- K**eep eye contact.

A person with dementia may be easily agitated or afraid. Tell him or her you are there to help.

#### Address Firearm Safety

When speaking with a caregiver, ask if there are weapons in the home where a person with dementia lives. If so, advise him or her to remove firearms altogether. If that is not possible:

- Store the weapon in a gun safe or locked container.
- Store the key in a safe location.
- Store the gun unloaded, with a safety lock.

### WANDERING CALLS

#### Recognize Wandering

Look for these clues a person may need help:

- Blank or confused facial expression.
- Inappropriate attire.
- Unbalanced or shuffling gait.
- Person not aware of unsafe actions or situations.
- Age (Dementia is more likely with advanced age, but can also affect those under age 65).

#### Search & Rescue

Call **800.625.3780** to connect to **MedicAlert + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return**, a 24-hour nationwide emergency response service for access to:

- Caregiver contact information.
- Critical medical information.
- Assistance with found persons who are not enrolled.

If a found person is not enrolled, share this valuable resource with caregivers and encourage them to enroll the person. Law Enforcement have a direct connection to MASR through RISS and LEO.

### DRIVING CALLS

Help ensure a positive resolution to a driving incident.

- Issue a citation to create a paper trail.
- Do not let the person drive home.
- Follow local agency protocols for reporting the incident to the DMV.

### ABUSE & NEGLECT CALLS

Situations of abuse and neglect can be complicated and require careful response.

- If the person is injured, transport to a hospital immediately.
- If the person is not injured but in immediate danger, move him or her to a safe location (preferably a hospital if in compliance with agency policy).
- If the person is not in immediate danger, offer referral to available resources.
- Always involve Adult Protective Services.

### SHOPLIFTING CALLS

If a person with dementia unknowingly walks out of a store without paying:

- Attempt to resolve the issue with the store manager instead of arresting the person and filing criminal charges.
- Inform the person's caregiver about the incident and recommend the person be accompanied on future shopping trips.

### DISASTER RESPONSE

To move a person from danger and help keep him or her calm in evacuation situations:

- Avoid physical force or restraint.
- Be creative rather than rely on reality.
- Provide one-on-one instruction.
- Provide step-by-step instructions using simple language.
- Try to relocate the person to a quiet place.
- Use distraction by giving the person a simple task.
- Ensure the person is watched, at all times, to prevent wandering.

### RESOURCES

These tips are a part of the Alzheimer's Association "Approaching Alzheimer's: First Responder Training" online education program. Learn more at [alz.org/firstresponders](http://alz.org/firstresponders). Resources for you and your community members:

#### Alzheimer's Association

- 24/7 Helpline: **800.272.3900**
- Website: [alz.org](http://alz.org)
- Safety Center: [alz.org/safety](http://alz.org/safety)

#### MedicAlert® + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return® Program

- 24-hour Emergency Response Line: **800.625.3780**

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