Autism/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. Again, even if the bracelet indicates that the person has a mental impairment and provides a cell number to a contact person is an easy way to ensure their loved one is identified quickly to be returned quickly.

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!

Officer Laurie Reyes
Laurie.Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov
Officer Tara Wimmer
Tara.Wimmer@montgomerycountymd.gov
PLEASE WATCH OUT FOR OUR AUTISTIC CHILD

We have a child with Autism. Our child's name is _______________.
He/she is ____ years old.

We watch our child very carefully, but sometimes he/she unpredictably wanders away.

If you see our child and he/she is alone please call ________________.
We are probably already looking for him/her.

If you can not reach me at the number above
Please also call 911 and tell them that you have found our child.

______________ does not speak very well. Our child does not appreciate danger.
He/she might approach a dog or walk into the street without looking. He/she might walk in your house if a door is open.

______________ will become lost very easily and not know he/she is lost. If you ask our child a question he will likely not answer.

______________ may seem to be deaf. However, our child can hear. But he/she does not appreciate or act upon things that he hears or sees.

Thank You,

______________________________ (Name)
______________________________ (Address)
______________________________ (Phone)

If you would like to know more about Autism please go to www.autismspeaks.com
If you have any questions regarding this document, please feel free to contact
Officer Laurie Reyes Laurie.Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov
Officer Tara Wimmer Tara.Wimmer@montgomerycountymd.gov

A PDF of this document can be found at the site below. The provided information can be modified specific to your loved one.
http://www.mymcpnews.com/resources/project-lifesaver/
Autism Elopement 911 “Script”

The below 911 script is to be filled out ahead of time by caregivers of individuals with Autism. In the event of an elopement, caregivers can easily relay the important information to the 911 call taker and responding officers.

Child’s Name

INSERT CURRENT PICTURE HERE

Height: Weight:
Hair: Allergies
Eyes: Diagnosis:
Birthdate:

Call 911 immediately in the event of an elopement.

My child may do the following should they elope...(bolt and run, not respond to name, go to bodies of water, etc.)

My child may go to the following destination should they elope...(local parks, local businesses, bodies of water, pools, ponds, etc.)

If you encounter my child the following would be helpful for officers to know... (they may bolt and run, they may not respond to their name, they may hide, etc)

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It is beneficial to responding officers that you are familiar with potential points of interest for your child as well as the locations of bodies of water. Please print out and include with your 911 script a Google map of the area around your home and pin point any potential dangers or possible destinations your child may be drawn towards in the event of an elopement.

(Example)

Nearby Bodies of Water    A = Our House (12345 ----- Street)

Refer to our “Wandering Safety Tip Sheet” and our “Autism Neighbor Letter” for other safety tips.

If you have any questions or concerns about Autism safety, please contact
Officer Laurie Reyes or Officer Tara Wimmer
Laurie.Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov
Tara.Wimmer@montgomerycountymd.gov

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