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Precautions Can Safeguard Loved Ones

Families can take steps to keep older relatives safe and to prevent wandering, which can lead to tragic consequences. The Bureau of Criminal Investigation's Missing Persons Unit, part of the Ohio Attorney General's Office, offers important advice and assistance.

Tips to reduce wandering

- Encourage movement and exercise to reduce anxiety and restlessness.
- Ensure that all basic needs are met.
- Involve your loved one in daily activities, such as folding laundry or preparing dinner.
- Redirect pacing or restless behavior.
- Place a color-matching cloth over doorknobs to camouflage them.
- Position a mirror near doorways, which can discourage a person with dementia from exiting.
- Be reassuring if a loved one feels lost, abandoned or disoriented.
- Enroll your family member in a "safe return" program, such as Medic Alert + Safe Return or Project Lifesaver.
- Inform neighbors and local emergency responders of your loved one's condition and keep a list of their names and phone numbers.
- Install deadbolt or slide-bolt locks on exterior doors and limit access to potentially dangerous areas.
- Never lock a person with dementia in a home without supervision.

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Missing Persons Unit Services



- BCI's Missing Persons Unit issues Missing Adult Alerts in coordination with local law enforcement when someone over age 65 or with a mental disability is missing and at risk of serious physical harm.
- Staff members provide investigative assistance using law enforcement databases, social media and other resources.
- The Attorney General's Office maintains a website (www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/MissingPersons) listing case details and providing missing person posters and other resources.
- The unit operates a toll-free, 24-hour hotline (800-325-5604) to provide information and assistance.

If a loved one is missing:

- Immediately file a report with your local law enforcement agency.
- Limit access to your loved one's home until law enforcement arrives. Do not touch anything in the missing person's room or home.
- Give law enforcement officers a complete description of your loved one, recent photos, facts related to his or her disappearance, social media website accounts, cellphone numbers, friends' information and anything else they request.
- Be prepared to provide fingerprints, dental records and DNA to help find your loved one.



**Ohio Attorney General's Office
Bureau of Criminal Investigation**

Missing Persons Unit
800-325-5604

**[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/
MissingPersons](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/MissingPersons)**