

Endangered Person Alert System

What you Should Know about Endangered Persons in Iowa and Across America.

Adults with Alzheimer's disease or another related Dementia:

Alzheimer's is a progressive and fatal brain disease. Alzheimer's destroys brain cells, causing memory loss and problems with thinking and behavior severe enough to affect work, lifelong hobbies or social life. Today, as many as 5.3 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease and it is the seventh-leading cause of death in the United States.

Safety is important for everyone, but individuals with [Alzheimer's disease](#) or other [related dementias](#) and their caregivers need to take particular precautions when it comes to creating a safe environment.

Alzheimer's causes a number of changes in the brain and body that may affect safety. Depending on the stage of the disease, these can include:

- **Judgment:** forgetting how to use household appliances
- **Sense of time and place:** getting lost on one's own street; being unable to recognize or find familiar areas in the home
- **Behavior:** becoming easily confused, suspicious or fearful
- **Physical ability:** having trouble with balance; using a walker or wheelchair to get around
- **Senses:** experiencing changes in vision, hearing, sensitivity to temperatures or depth perception

Wandering and getting lost

A person with dementia is at risk for wandering and becoming lost; many do so repeatedly. In fact, more than 60 percent of those with dementia will wander, and if not found within 24 hours, up to half of individuals who wander will suffer serious injury or death.

Signs of wandering behavior

A person may be at risk for wandering if he or she:

- Comes back from a regular walk or drive later than usual
- Tries to fulfill former obligations, such as going to work
- Tries or wants to "go home," even when at home
- Is restless, paces or makes repetitive movements
- Has a hard time locating familiar places like the bathroom, bedroom or dining room
- Acts as if doing a hobby or chore, but nothing gets done (moves around pots and dirt without actually planting anything)
- Acts nervous or anxious in crowded areas, such as shopping malls or restaurants

Individuals with Autism:

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause for autism.

In December 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued their autism prevalence report. The report concluded that the prevalence of autism had risen to 1 in every 110 births in the United States and almost 1 in 70 boys. The issuance of this report caused a media uproar, but the news was not a surprise to the Autism Society or to the 1.5 million Americans living with the effects of autism spectrum disorder.

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Autism is treatable. Children do not "outgrow" autism, but studies show that early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes.

Here are some signs to look for in the children in your life:

- Lack of, or delay in spoken language
- Repetitive use of language and/or motor mannerisms (e.g., hand-flapping, twirling objects)
- Little or no eye contact
- Lack of interest in peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous or make-believe play
- Persistent fixation on parts of objects

When children with autism wander, there are several things to keep in mind:

- They typically prefer being alone and will often leave group or group setting
- Have no real fears or understand danger, may have lessened sensitivity to pain
- Generally non-responsive to verbal cues; may act as if deaf and can't be expected to respond to searcher's shouts
- In urban areas, 25% are found within 0.2 miles, 50% are found within 0.4 miles and 75% are found within 0.9 miles with a max zone of 7.7 miles

Statistics on Endangered Missing in Iowa:

When a person is reported to law enforcement as missing in the State of Iowa, officers enter a description of the missing individual, and the circumstances under which that person went missing, into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). This database then allows local and state agencies to regularly evaluate trends related to missing persons in communities across the state. Below are statistics related to Iowa's missing who in 2009 were classified as "endangered" or "disabled".

Missing in 2009:

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| Adults | 780 |
| Endangered | 232 |
| Disabled | 198 |
| Juveniles | 4,558 |
| Endangered | 24 |
| Disabled | 8 |
| Lost/wandered | 2 |

Applicable NCIC Definitions:

Endangered - A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety is in danger.

Disability – A person of any age who is missing under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting himself/herself or others to personal and immediate danger.

Lost or Wandered Away – A minor who is lost or wandered away. This category does not include those persons taken by force or runaways.