QUICK TIPS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS
Be ready with the right response in situations involving a person living with dementia.

FOR ALL CASES

Use the TALK tactics

T - Take it slow.
A - Ask simple questions.
L - Imitate reality checks.
K - Keep eye contact.

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

Address firearm safety

When speaking with a caregiver, ask if there are weapons in the home where the person with dementia lives. If so, advise the caregiver 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 by looking for these clues a person may need help:

- Blank or confused facial expression.
- Inappropriate attire.
- Unbalanced or shuffling gait.
- Unaware of unsafe actions or situations.
- Age (Dementia is more likely with advanced age, but can also affect those under age 65).

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.

SHOPLIFTING CALLS

If a person living 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.

ABUSE AND 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 them 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.

DISASTER RESPONSE

To move a person from danger and help keep them calm in evacuation situations:

- Avoid physical force or restraint.
- Be creative to get the person to act as needed.
- Provide one-on-one instruction.
- 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 part of the Alzheimer’s Association® “Approaching Alzheimer’s: First Responder Training” online education program. Learn more at alz.org/firstresponders. Other resources for you and your community members include:

- Association 24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900
- Website: alz.org
- Safety Center: alz.org/safety

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