BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Bluetooth Trackers AirTag, Tile & SmartTag

What they do, how to set them up, and how to stay safe — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for every owner and gift-giver

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

AirTag, Pixel Tag, SmartTag, Tile & more · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to the little tags that help you find your keys, wallet, luggage and more. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, plus slow, step-by-step directions. If a screen looks a little different on your phone, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting Started

What these little tags really do, how the finding networks work, and how to pick the right one for your phone.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. I'm Bill, and for more than 30 years I've helped people make sense of their technology. Today I help folks right here in Portage County, Ohio, feel at home with their phones, computers and gadgets. This guide is about one of the smallest gadgets you can own: a Bluetooth tracker, the little tag you hang on your keys or slip into a wallet or suitcase.

Trackers have become a favorite stocking stuffer, and for good reason. They're inexpensive, the battery lasts about a year, and on a hurried morning they can save you a frantic search for your keys. But they also come with a lot of confusing names — AirTag, Find My, Find Hub, SmartTag, Tile — and with some real questions about safety and privacy. This guide sorts all of that out.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this guide does for you

It tells you, in plain English, which tracker works with *your* phone, how to set it up, how to find something that's gone missing, how to change the battery safely, and what to do if your phone ever warns you that someone else's tracker is traveling with you. Every chapter explains what a feature does for you first, then walks through it one step at a time.

Who this guide is for

- Anyone who just unwrapped a tracker and isn't sure where to start.
- Anyone shopping for one as a gift and wondering which kind to buy.
- Families thinking about using trackers for luggage, a car, a pet, or a loved one — and wanting the honest pros and cons first.
- Anyone who has seen an alert like "AirTag Found Moving With You" and wants to know what it means.

The big promise: you can't break it

Setting up a tracker, renaming it, playing a sound, or turning on Lost Mode can't hurt anything. If something goes sideways, you can remove the tag and set it up again. There are only two places where I'll ask you to slow down and read carefully: the coin battery inside, which is dangerous if a child or pet swallows it, and the chapters about unwanted-tracker alerts and personal safety. Everything else is safe to explore.

TIP

You're never stuck alone

If you get stuck or a message worries you, call or text me at **(330) 200-8042**. A quick, calm second opinion is what I'm here for. Details are in Chapter 33, *When to Call Bill*.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Tracker Does — and Doesn't Do

A Bluetooth tracker is a small, battery-powered tag — about the size of a large coin or a credit card — that sends out a short-range Bluetooth signal. Your phone listens for that signal. When the tag is close by, your phone can make it beep or point you toward it. When it's far away, other people's phones quietly help report where it is.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

It turns "Where on earth did I put my keys?" into a quick tap on your phone. It can also show you, on a map, roughly where you left your bag, or where your checked suitcase landed.

What a tracker is NOT

- **It is not GPS.** A tracker has no GPS chip and no cell service of its own. It only knows where it is when a nearby phone hears it and reports in.
- **It is not live, second-by-second tracking.** On the map you'll see a *last known* location and the time it was seen. In a busy place that may be minutes old; in the countryside it may be hours old, or there may be no update at all.
- **It is not an anti-theft device.** Today's trackers are designed to *warn* strangers that a tag is traveling with them — which means a thief can be told about it too. See Chapter 23, *A Tracker in the Car: Honest Expectations*.
- **It is not a safety device for people.** Apple, Google and Samsung all build in protections against tracking people. For a loved one, see Chapter 25, *A Loved One with Memory Loss: Honest Limits*.

Two ways a tracker helps you find things

Where it is	How your phone finds it
Nearby (in the house, the car, the yard)	Your phone connects to the tag over Bluetooth. You can make it play a sound, and on many newer phones an arrow points the way and counts down the distance.
Far away (left at a restaurant, lost luggage)	Other phones that happen to pass near your tag report its location, privately and anonymously, to the maker's finding network. You see it on a map in your app.

GOOD TO KNOW

Range is shorter than you'd think

Bluetooth reaches roughly the length of a house, give or take — walls, metal and crowds shorten it. Beyond that, finding depends entirely on other people's phones passing by. That's why trackers work best in towns, airports and shopping areas, and least well on a quiet country road.

HEADS UP

A tracker can't stop you from losing something

It helps you *find* things. It doesn't prevent loss, and it can't guarantee a lost item will ever be reported. Think of it as a very good helper, not insurance.

CHAPTER 3

How the Finding Networks Work

The clever part of a tracker isn't the tag — it's the **finding network** behind it. Each big phone company runs one. Phones that belong to the network listen for nearby tags and, without their owners noticing, send an encrypted location report back. Only the tag's owner can read it.

Network	Who's in it
Apple Find My network	A crowdsourced network of over a billion Apple devices. Used by AirTag and by other makers' tags labeled "Works with Apple Find My."
Google Find Hub network	Android phones that take part in finding (Google says over a billion Android devices). Used by Pixel Tag and by tags labeled for Find Hub, such as Chipolo, Pebblebee and Moto Tag.
Samsung Galaxy Find Network	Samsung Galaxy phones and tablets that agree to offline finding — Samsung says more than 900 million participating Galaxy devices. Used by Galaxy SmartTag.
Tile network	Phones running the Tile app or the Life360 app. Works on both iPhone and Android.

Is my phone helping strangers find their things?

Probably, yes — and that's how the system works for everyone. Apple says the Find My network is anonymous and encrypted. Google says Find Hub location reports are end-to-end encrypted, so Google itself can't see your tag's location. Your phone doesn't learn whose tag it heard, and the owner doesn't learn whose phone helped.

Android: choosing how much your phone takes part

On Android you can choose. Open **Settings > Google > All services > Find Hub** and tap **Find your offline devices**. The choices are **Off**, **Without network**, **With network in busy places only**, and **With network everywhere**. To use the network, your phone must have a PIN, pattern or password set.

> **TIP**
>
> **Bill's suggestion**
>
> If you own a Find Hub tag, choose **With network everywhere**. The more phones that take part, the better everyone's chances of getting lost things back — including yours.

CHAPTER 4

Which Tracker Works with Which Phone

This is the single most important thing to get right, especially when you're buying a gift. Each tracker belongs to one finding network, and each network belongs to one kind of phone. A tag that doesn't match your phone will simply be a very small paperweight.

Tracker	iPhone	Android (any brand)	Samsung Galaxy
Apple AirTag	Yes — Find My app	No (can only detect one)	No (can only detect one)
Google Pixel Tag	No	Yes — Find Hub app, Android 9 or later	Yes — Find Hub app
Find Hub tags (Chipolo, Pebblebee, Moto Tag and others)	Only models that say "Works with Apple Find My"	Yes — Find Hub app	Yes — Find Hub app
Samsung Galaxy SmartTag2	No	No	Yes — SmartThings, Android 9 or later
Samsung Galaxy SmartTag3	Partly — find and share via SmartThings	No	Yes — SmartThings
Tile (Mate, Pro, Slim, Sticker)	Yes — Tile or Life360 app	Yes — Tile or Life360 app	Yes

The quick rule of thumb

- **iPhone?** An **AirTag** is the simplest choice. Tile also works.
- **Samsung Galaxy?** A **SmartTag** or any **Find Hub** tag. Tile also works.
- **Other Android phone (Pixel, Motorola and so on)?** A **Pixel Tag** or another **Find Hub** tag. Tile also works.
- **A family with both iPhones and Androids sharing one item?** Tile works on both. Some Pebblebee and Chipolo tags can be set to either Apple or Google, but only one at a time.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why can my Android phone "see" an AirTag at all?

Because of safety rules, not finding features. Apple and Google created a shared standard so that an iPhone or an Android phone can warn you if an unknown tracker of *any* brand seems to be traveling with you. Your Android phone can detect an AirTag for that reason, but it can't set one up or use one. See Chapter 28, *Unwanted-Tracker Alerts: How They Work*.

HEADS UP

Read the box before you buy

Look for the words **Works with Apple Find My**, **Find Hub** (older boxes may still say Google's previous name, Find My Device), **Galaxy SmartTag**, or **Tile**. If the box doesn't name one of these, the tag may depend on a lesser-known app with a much smaller network.

CHAPTER 5

Choosing the Right Tracker for You

Once you know which network fits your phone, the rest is about shape, price and a few nice extras. Here are the main choices as of November 2026. Prices are list or typical U.S. prices; stores often run sales, especially around the holidays.

Tracker	List price (U.S.)	Battery	Good to know
Apple AirTag (2nd generation, 2026)	$29 each; four-pack about $100	CR2032 coin, you replace it	Needs a holder or key ring, sold separately
Google Pixel Tag (Nov. 2026)	$29 each; four-pack about $100	CR2032, lasts over a year	Has a button that rings your phone
Samsung Galaxy SmartTag3 (Nov. 2026)	$29.99; four-pack about $100	CR2032, up to 550 days	Galaxy phones; some features on iPhone
Samsung Galaxy SmartTag2	About $30 or less	CR2032	Galaxy phones only
Tile Mate / Pro / Slim / Sticker	About $25 to $35 each	Varies by model	Works on iPhone and Android

Which shape for which job

For…	Look for
Keys	A round or key-fob tag on the ring. An AirTag needs a key ring holder; many other tags have a built-in hole.
Wallet	A thin, credit-card-shaped tag (for example Tile Slim, Chipolo CARD or Pebblebee Card) slides into a card slot.
Luggage	Any tag tucked in an outside fabric pocket or a luggage-tag holder.
TV remote, glasses case	A small sticker-style or round tag, attached with adhesive or a holder.

TIP

Budget for the holder

An AirTag and a Pixel Tag have no hole for a key ring, so plan on a holder, loop or key ring case. Simple ones are inexpensive. Choose one that closes securely — a tag that pops out is a tag that gets lost, and a loose coin battery is a danger to small children.

GOOD TO KNOW

What about a subscription?

AirTag, Pixel Tag, SmartTag and the Find Hub tags work fully without a subscription. Tile works without one too, but some features need Tile Premium. See Chapter 20, *Tile Premium: Is the Subscription Worth It?*.

CHAPTER 6

Giving a Tracker as a Gift

A tracker makes a thoughtful, practical gift — for a grandparent who misplaces keys, a college student, or a traveler. A few minutes of planning makes sure it's a gift that actually gets used.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why it's a good gift

It solves a real everyday annoyance, it costs about the same as a nice lunch, and once it's set up there's almost nothing to maintain except a battery about once a year.

Before you buy

1. Find out what phone the person uses: iPhone, Samsung Galaxy, or another Android. Check the table in Chapter 4, *Which Tracker Works with Which Phone*.
2. Decide what it's for: keys, wallet, luggage or a remote. Pick the shape to match.
3. Add a holder or key ring if the tag doesn't have one built in.
4. Pick up a spare CR2032 battery to tuck in the box — it's a thoughtful touch.

After it's unwrapped

The person who will **use** the tracker should set it up on **their own phone**, signed in to their own Apple Account, Google Account, Samsung account or Tile account. A tracker belongs to whoever sets it up. If you set it up on your phone and then hand it over, their phone may warn them that an unknown tracker is traveling with them — exactly what the safety system is designed to do.

HEADS UP

Don't set it up for them on your account

It's tempting to "get it ready" before giving it. Instead, sit down together and let them do the setup on their phone while you help. It only takes a minute or two, and it means the tag is truly theirs. If you'd like to see where it is too, they can share it with you afterward — see Chapter 12, *Sharing an AirTag with Family* or Chapter 16, *Finding, Ringing & Sharing in Find Hub*.

TIP

Setting it up together is a great lesson

Setting up a tracker is a gentle first step in learning a phone's Find features — the same app that finds your keys can also help find a lost phone. If you'd like a patient hand with that, it's exactly what my Device Training sessions cover.

PART 2

Apple AirTag & the Find My App

For iPhone owners: the AirTag, the Find My app, finding things nearby, Lost Mode, and sharing with family.

CHAPTER 7

Meet the AirTag

The AirTag is Apple's tracker: a small, round disc of white plastic with a polished steel back, about the size of a large coin. It works with an iPhone or iPad and shows up in the **Find My** app. In early 2026 Apple released the **AirTag (2nd generation)**, which looks the same as the original but finds things from farther away and has a louder speaker.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

Clip it to your keys or drop it in your bag, and your iPhone can make it chime, point you to it with an arrow, or show where it was last seen on a map — anywhere other Apple devices pass by.

The two AirTags at a glance

	AirTag (original, 2021)	AirTag (2nd generation, 2026)
Looks	Round, white, steel back	Same size and shape
Needs on iPhone	iOS 14.5 or later	iOS 26.2.1 or later
Precision Finding	Yes, on supported iPhones	Works from farther away; also on Apple Watch Series 9 / Ultra 2 or later
Battery	CR2032 coin cell, you replace it	CR2032 coin cell, you replace it
Water resistance	IP67	IP67 (1 meter for up to 30 minutes)

What it costs

The 2nd-generation AirTag launched at **$29** for one, or about $100 for a four-pack — the same as the original. Holders and key rings are sold separately. Watch for holiday sales; prices on the four-pack often drop.

GOOD TO KNOW

What you need

An iPhone or iPad signed in to an **Apple Account** (Apple's new name for the Apple ID), with Bluetooth turned on. An AirTag can't be set up on an Android phone or a computer.

HEADS UP

AirTags are for things, not people

Apple says plainly that AirTags should not be used to track people, or property that isn't yours, and that tracking people without consent is a crime in many places. We'll cover the safety side in Part 6.

CHAPTER 8

Setting Up an AirTag

Setting up an AirTag takes about a minute. Your iPhone does most of the work — you just hold the two close together and answer a couple of questions.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

Once it's set up, the AirTag is linked to your Apple Account. It shows up in Find My under the name you choose, such as "Keys" or "Purse," ready whenever you need it.

Before you start

- Update your iPhone: **Settings > General > Software Update**. A 2nd-generation AirTag needs iOS 26.2.1 or later.
- Make sure Bluetooth is on: **Settings > Bluetooth**.
- Pull out the little plastic tab if the AirTag came with one, so the battery connects. You'll hear a chime.
- Have only **one** AirTag near your phone at a time.

To set it up

1. Unlock your iPhone and go to the Home Screen.
2. Hold the AirTag right next to your iPhone. A card pops up. Tap **Connect**.
3. Choose a name from the list, such as **Keys**, **Bag** or **Wallet**. Or tap **Custom Name**, type your own, and pick a small picture (emoji) to go with it.
4. Tap **Continue** or **Agree** to link the AirTag to your Apple Account.
5. Tap **Done**. Your AirTag now appears in the **Find My** app under **Items**.

If the card doesn't appear

- Lock your iPhone with the side button, then wake and unlock it and wait about 15 seconds.
- Or open **Find My**, tap **Items**, tap the **Add** (+) button, then tap **AirTag**.
- Check **Settings > Privacy & Security > Location Services** is on, and that **Find My** is allowed to use your location. Turn on **Precise Location** for the best results.
- If you see "More than one AirTag detected," move the other AirTags away and try again.

TIP

Name it for what it's on

Give each AirTag a plain, specific name — "Car keys," "Blue suitcase," "Bill's wallet." When you have several, you'll be glad you did.

CHAPTER 9

The Find My App: A Quick Tour

Find My is the free app already on every iPhone (a green circle with a white dot). It's where your AirTags live, along with your Apple devices and any friends or family who share their location with you.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

One app finds your keys, your iPad, your AirPods and your phone — and lets you share an item with family. Learning it once pays off many times.

The tabs along the bottom

Tab	What's there
People	Friends and family who share their location with you (only if they choose to).
Devices	Your iPhone, iPad, Mac, Apple Watch and AirPods, plus family devices if you use Family Sharing.
Items	Your AirTags and any "Works with Apple Find My" tags from other makers. This is where you'll spend most of your time.

What you see when you tap an item

- A map with the item's last known location and how long ago it was seen.
- **Play** (Play Sound) to make it chime.
- **Find** (Find Nearby) on iPhones with Ultra Wideband, to get an arrow and distance — see Chapter 10, *Finding Something Nearby: Play Sound & Precision Finding*.
- **Directions** to open the spot in Maps.
- Further down: **Lost Mode**, sharing, battery warnings, and **Remove Item**.

Good-to-know limits

- Find My can hold up to **32 items**, including items shared with you. AirPods count too.
- If an item hasn't been heard from, Find My shows its **last known location for up to seven days**. After that it shows "No location found."

- AirTags show up only in the Find My app on iPhone, iPad, Mac or Apple Watch — not on the iCloud website.

TIP

Put Find My on your first Home Screen

Press and hold the Find My icon and drag it to your first page or your Dock. When you're hunting for your keys at the door, you'll want it right there.

CHAPTER 10

Finding Something Nearby: Play Sound & Precision Finding

Most of the time, a lost item is somewhere in the house — under a cushion, in yesterday's coat pocket, in the car. That's where an AirTag shines.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

Instead of searching every room, you tap one button and follow the chime — or follow an on-screen arrow that tells you how many feet to go and which way to turn.

To make it play a sound

1. Open **Find My** and tap **Items**.
2. Tap the item you're looking for.
3. Tap **Play** (Play Sound). The AirTag plays a series of chimes.
4. Walk toward the sound. Tap Play again if you need more time.

To use Precision Finding (the arrow)

Apple says the **Find** (Find Nearby) button works on **iPhone 15 and later**, which have the Ultra Wideband chip that measures distance and direction.

1. In **Find My**, tap **Items**, then tap your item.
2. Tap **Find** (Find Nearby).
3. Move slowly around the room until your iPhone connects to the AirTag.
4. Follow the arrow and the distance on screen. Your iPhone vibrates as you get closer.
5. Tap **Play** when you're close to hear it, and tap the flashlight button if the phone says it needs more light.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you don't see the Find button

Your iPhone may not have Ultra Wideband, or the AirTag may be out of range. Check **Settings > Privacy & Security > Location Services > Find My** and turn on **Precise Location**. You can always fall back on Play Sound.

TIP

Walls and metal get in the way

Apple notes that walls and objects between you and the tag affect the arrow. If it seems confused, step into the doorway of each room and try again.

CHAPTER 11

Lost Mode: When Something Is Really Missing

If you can't find an item nearby and the map shows it somewhere you don't expect — or doesn't show it at all — it's time for **Lost Mode**. Lost Mode lets anyone who finds your AirTag see a message and a way to reach you, and lets Find My notify you when it's seen.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

A kind stranger who finds your keys can tap the AirTag with their phone and see your message and phone number — so they can get the keys back to you.

To turn on Lost Mode

1. Open **Find My** and tap **Items**.
2. Tap the missing item, then tap the **More** button (three dots in a circle) if you see one.
3. Scroll to the section called **Lost [item]**.
4. Tap **Lost Mode** (on some versions it's called **Show Contact Info**).
5. Follow the steps on screen: enter a phone number or email and a short message, then tap **Activate**.

What a finder sees

Anyone who holds the top of an iPhone, or an NFC-capable Android phone, near the white side of the AirTag gets a link to a web page. It shows the AirTag's serial number, the last four digits of the owner's phone number and, in Lost Mode, your message and contact details.

HEADS UP

Choose what contact details you share

Your message and number are visible to whoever finds the tag. A cell number or an email address is usually best. Keep the message short, like "These are my keys — please call." Don't include your home address.

TIP

When you get it back

Open the item in Find My, go back to the **Lost** section, and turn Lost Mode off, so your contact details stop showing.

CHAPTER 12

Sharing an AirTag with Family

If your spouse borrows your car keys, or the whole family uses the same suitcase, you can **share** the AirTag so other people can find it too. Third-party "Works with Apple Find My" tags can be shared the same way.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

The people you share with can see the item on their own map, play a sound and use Precision Finding. And because they're on the list, their iPhones won't warn them that an unknown AirTag is traveling with them.

To share an AirTag

1. Open **Find My** and tap **Items**.
2. Tap the AirTag you want to share.
3. Under **Share This AirTag**, tap **Add Person**.
4. Choose the person from your contacts. They get an invitation and tap to accept.

The rules

- You can share with up to **five** other people.
- They don't have to be in your Family Sharing group, but they need an Apple Account and an up-to-date iPhone or iPad.
- You need two-factor authentication turned on for your Apple Account.
- Everyone you share with can see the item's location — so share only with people you trust.

GOOD TO KNOW

Borrowing from family

If you borrow an item with an AirTag from someone in your Family Sharing group, Apple says you can tap the tracking notification and turn off alerts for that item for one day or indefinitely.

TIP

Stop sharing when you're done

If you lend your car keys for a weekend, you can remove the person afterward from the same Share This AirTag section.

PART 3

Android: Google Find Hub & Samsung SmartTag

For Android owners: Google's Find Hub app and its tags, including the new Pixel Tag, plus Samsung's Galaxy SmartTag.

CHAPTER 13

Google Find Hub: The Android Finding App

On Android phones, Google's finding app is called **Find Hub**. Until 2025 it was called **Find My Device** — so if a friend, a box or an older article uses that name, it means the same thing. Find Hub finds your Android phone, tablet, watch and earbuds, and any tracker tag built for the Find Hub network.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

One app on your Android phone shows your lost phone, your earbuds and your tagged keys or luggage on a map, and can make any of them ring.

Make sure Find Hub is ready

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Security**, then **Find Hub**. (On some phones the wording differs slightly.)
2. Check that **Allow device to be located** is turned on.
3. Go back to **Settings > Location** and make sure **Use location** is on.
4. Install the **Find Hub** app from the Play Store if it isn't already on your phone, and sign in.
5. Set a screen lock (PIN, pattern or password) if you don't have one — Find Hub's offline finding needs it.

TIP

You can also look from a computer

Open a web browser, go to **android.com/find** and sign in with your Google Account to see your devices. Google says the Find Hub app gives the best results for tags found through the network.

GOOD TO KNOW

Samsung Galaxy owners have two choices

On a Galaxy phone, Find Hub works for Find Hub tags, and Samsung's own apps work for Samsung's SmartTag. See Chapter 17, *Samsung Galaxy SmartTag2 & SmartTag3*.

CHAPTER 14

Find Hub Tags: Pixel Tag, Chipolo, Pebblebee, Moto Tag

Many companies make tags for Google's Find Hub network. In August 2026 Google announced its own, the **Google Pixel Tag**, which went on sale in November 2026. Google's compatible-devices page lists dozens of others.

The Google Pixel Tag

- A small oval tag with a metal side, a built-in speaker and a **button**.
- Works with Android phones running **Android 9 or later**.
- Battery: a user-replaceable **CR2032** coin cell that Google says lasts over a year.
- Water and dust resistance: IP67.
- Ultra Wideband for precise finding on compatible phones, and Bluetooth Channel Sounding for distance estimates on phones with Android 16 and Bluetooth 6.0.
- Like the AirTag, it has no key ring hole — plan on a holder.

Other Find Hub tags (examples from Google's list)

Brand	Find Hub models
Chipolo	Chipolo POP (round), Chipolo CARD (wallet), Chipolo LOOP and others.
Pebblebee	Clip 5 (key ring), Card 5 (wallet), Halo and LÔC8.
Motorola	Moto Tag and Moto Tag 2.
Others	UGREEN FineTrack, Rolling Square, Journey LOC8, Orbitkey, Ridge, KeySmart and more — plus some earbuds and headphones.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some tags work with iPhone OR Android — but not both at once

Some Pebblebee and Chipolo models can be set up with either Apple Find My or Google Find Hub. You pick one when you set it up. To switch, you reset the tag following the maker's directions.

HEADS UP

Features vary by tag

Not every Find Hub tag does everything. Precise arrow-style finding needs Ultra Wideband in both the tag and the phone, and some tags lack left-behind alerts. Check the maker's page before you buy.

CHAPTER 15

Setting Up a Tag with Find Hub

Find Hub tags use Google's **Fast Pair**: you bring the tag near your phone and a card pops up. Here are Google's steps for the Pixel Tag; other Find Hub tags work much the same way.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

In a minute or two your tag is linked to your Google Account and appears in Find Hub, ready to ring, map or share.

To set up a Pixel Tag

1. Turn on **Bluetooth** and make sure your phone is connected to the internet.
2. Unlock your phone and stay on the Home screen.
3. Place the tag right next to your phone and pull out the plastic tab from the battery.
4. When a card pops up, tap **Connect**.
5. Read the Acceptable Use Policy and tap **Continue**, then read the Terms and tap **I accept**.
6. When asked about location, tap **When using this app**.
7. The tag is added to Find Hub. Pick a category such as **Keys** or **Backpack** to name it.

If the card doesn't pop up

- Open **Settings > Connected devices** — the tag may be waiting at the top.
- Or open **Find Hub**, tap **Add Device**, and follow the steps.
- If you dismissed the card, Google says it waits 5 minutes before showing again (24 hours after a second dismissal). Turning Bluetooth off and on, or restarting the phone, clears the wait.

TIP

Other brands

For a Chipolo, Pebblebee or Moto Tag, follow the little card in the box. Usually you press the tag's button to wake it, then tap **Connect** when your phone offers it.

CHAPTER 16

Finding, Ringing & Sharing in Find Hub

Once your tag is in Find Hub, finding it is a matter of a few taps. You can also share it with up to ten people, check its battery, and remove it when you no longer use it.

To find an item

1. Open the **Find Hub** app and tap your tag.
2. If it's out of Bluetooth range, look at the map for its last reported location.
3. If it's nearby, tap **Play sound** to make it ring, or tap **Find nearby** for on-screen directions and a distance meter.

Arrow-style finding (Ultra Wideband) needs both a compatible tag and a compatible phone. Google lists Pixel 8 Pro and later Pro models, Samsung Galaxy S21+ and Ultra and later Plus and Ultra models, and some Motorola Edge and Razr phones.

To share a tag with family

1. In **Find Hub**, tap the tag you want to share.
2. Tap **Share ownership** and follow the steps. Send the invitation by text, email or Quick Share.
3. The other person opens the link on their Android phone and taps **Accept** within 24 hours.
4. Back on your phone, open the tag, tap **Settings**, choose the person, and tap **Confirm**.

> GOOD TO KNOW
> **Sharing rules**
> You can share with up to **10** people, and they need Android 9 or later. Google's Pixel Tag help says tags can be shared only with people who use Android devices. Only the owner gets left-behind alerts.

Check the battery

Open the tag in Find Hub and look under its name. Google shows three levels: **OK**, **Low** and **Very Low**. Replace the battery when it reaches Low. See Chapter 26, *How to Change the Battery Safely*.

CHAPTER 17

Samsung Galaxy SmartTag2 & SmartTag3

Samsung makes its own trackers for Galaxy phones, called **Galaxy SmartTag**. They use Samsung's **Galaxy Find Network** and are managed in Samsung's **SmartThings** app, in a section Samsung calls SmartThings Find. Newer Galaxy phones also have a separate **Samsung Find** app for finding Galaxy phones, watches and earbuds.

The two current SmartTags

Model	What to know
Galaxy SmartTag2 (2023)	Works with Galaxy phones running Android 9 or later. Uses Bluetooth and, on phones that support it, Ultra Wideband.
Galaxy SmartTag3 (Nov. 2026)	About a third smaller and lighter than SmartTag2. $29.99 for one or about $100 for a four-pack, in white or black. Battery up to 550 days in normal use. Works with Galaxy phones, and for the first time some features on iPhone.

Handy SmartTag features

- **Compass View** — on Galaxy phones with Ultra Wideband or Bluetooth Channel Sounding, an on-screen compass shows direction and distance. With SmartTag3 and the newest Galaxy phones it works from up to 60 meters (about 200 feet) in the open.
- **Lost Mode** — anyone with an NFC phone who taps the tag can see contact details you entered beforehand.
- **Left Behind Alert** — your phone tells you when it loses touch with the tag.
- **Place Notification** (SmartTag3, a trial feature) — get an alert when a tagged item moves in or out of an area.
- **Button shortcuts** — press the tag's button to run a SmartThings routine, like turning on a lamp.

HEADS UP

On an iPhone, SmartTag3 is limited

Samsung says Compass View, Ring Phone and Left Behind Alert are not available on iOS. An iPhone owner can check and share a SmartTag3's location, but an AirTag is still the simpler choice for iPhone.

CHAPTER 18

Setting Up and Finding a SmartTag

SmartTags are set up in the **SmartThings** app, which comes on Galaxy phones. You'll need to be signed in to your **Samsung account**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

Once the tag is added, it appears on the SmartThings Find map and in your list of devices, ready to ring or locate.

To set up a SmartTag

1. Open **SmartThings** and make sure it's updated (check the Galaxy Store or Play Store).
2. Pull out the film between the battery and the tray, or insert the battery. Press the tag's button — it makes a sound.
3. When a pop-up says your tag was found, tap **Add**.
4. No pop-up? Tap **Devices**, then **+**, then **Add** under Samsung devices, and choose **Tag/Tracker**.
5. Follow the steps on screen. Or scan the QR code on the box: **Devices > + > Scan QR code**.

To find a SmartTag

1. Open **SmartThings** and tap the **Life** tab, then **Find**.
2. Tap your tag to see it on the map.
3. Choose the option to ring it, or use **Search Nearby** or Compass View if your phone supports it.

TIP

If pairing fails

Samsung suggests simply trying again two or three times, since nearby wireless devices can interfere. Turn off other Bluetooth gadgets for a moment and stand close to the tag.

GOOD TO KNOW

Turn Lost Mode off when you're done

Samsung recommends turning Lost Mode off once you have the item back, to protect your contact details.

PART 4

Tile — and Putting Trackers to Work

Tile for any phone, then the everyday jobs: keys, wallets, luggage, the car, pets, and a loved one — with honest limits.

CHAPTER 19

Tile: Trackers for Any Phone

Tile was one of the first Bluetooth tracker companies, and it's now owned by **Life360**, the family location-sharing company. Tile's big advantage is simple: it works on **both iPhone and Android**. That makes it handy for a household with mixed phones, or for someone who might switch phones later.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

One tracker that keeps working no matter which phone you carry, with an app on both iPhone and Android, and the option to see your Tiles in the Life360 app if your family already uses it.

The Tile family

Model	Best for
Tile Mate	The small, square everyday tag with a key ring hole. Usually the least expensive.
Tile Pro	Larger and louder, with the longest Bluetooth range in the line.
Tile Slim	Credit-card shaped, for wallets and passport holders.
Tile Sticker	A small adhesive disc for remotes, cameras and other gadgets.

The current Tiles came out in 2024, the first new lineup since Life360 bought the company. They include an **SOS** feature that works with the Life360 app: press the button in a set pattern to send an alert to your Life360 circle. Expect to pay roughly $25 to $35 per tag at list price, with frequent sales and multi-packs.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Tile network is smaller

AirTags lean on over a billion Apple devices, and Find Hub tags on Android phones. Tiles are found by phones running the **Tile** or **Life360** app — a much smaller crowd. Tile is great nearby and fine in busy places; far from town, an AirTag or Find Hub tag has better odds.

HEADS UP

The SOS button is not a medical alert

Tile's SOS depends on your phone being nearby, the Life360 app, and people in your circle seeing the alert. It is not monitored around the clock and doesn't call 911 by itself unless you have a Life360 plan that includes emergency dispatch. For a real medical alert, see Chapter 25, *A Loved One with Memory Loss: Honest Limits*.

CHAPTER 20

Tile Premium: Is the Subscription Worth It?

Tile works without paying anything beyond the tag: you can ring it, see it on a map, and have the Tile network help find it. Life360 also sells two optional subscriptions, set up inside the Tile app.

Plan (U.S.)	Price	What it adds
No subscription	Included	Ring your Tile, see it on a map, help from the Tile network
Tile Premium	$2.99 a month or $29.99 a year	Smart Alerts when you leave something behind, unlimited sharing, 30 days of location history, Worry-Free Warranty replacement, text access to Premium Customer Care
Tile Premium Protect	About $100 a year	Everything in Premium, plus Item Reimbursement (U.S.) if Tile can't find a registered item

How the trial works

- New subscribers get a **30-day trial** of Premium or Premium Protect.
- You're charged at the end of the trial unless you cancel first.
- Life360 says it currently can't offer refunds for Premium or Premium Protect.
- One subscription covers all of your Tiles.

TIP

Bill's honest take

For most people, the free features are enough. Premium makes sense if you'd really use left-behind alerts or want to share Tiles with a big family. If you start a trial, put a reminder in your calendar a few days before it ends so you can decide calmly.

SCAM ALERT

Subscriptions only come from the app

Life360 manages Tile subscriptions in the Tile app and your phone's app store. If an email, text or phone call says your "Tile account" needs payment by gift card or a wire, it's a scam. Close it and open the app yourself to check.

CHAPTER 21

Keys & Wallet: The Everyday Basics

Keys and wallets are what most people buy a tracker for, and it's where trackers work best: you're usually only a room or two away.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

No more patting every coat pocket on the way out the door. Tap Play Sound and follow the chime.

Setting up for success

1. Put the tag on the ring you carry every day — the one with the house and car keys.
2. For a wallet, use a card-shaped tag in a card slot, or a round tag in a coin pocket if it fits.
3. Name each tag clearly in your app: "House keys," "Brown wallet."
4. Practice once now: walk to another room and make it ring. Then you'll know exactly what to do when it counts.

Left-behind alerts

Some trackers can warn you when you walk away without the item. In Find Hub, open the tag, tap the Device details button next to its name, and turn on **Notify when left behind**. If your home address is in your Google Account, you won't get these alerts at home unless you change that.

HEADS UP

RFID-blocking wallets can block a tracker

Google warns that RFID-blocking wallets, carbon-fiber and aluminum cases can block a tag's signal. If your wallet has RFID blocking, test it: put the tag inside and see if your phone can still ring it.

TIP

A spare on the hook

If you have a spare set of keys, put a tag on those too — or at least keep the spare where you'll remember it. A tracker is a backup, not a substitute for a good habit.

CHAPTER 22

Luggage, Travel & Your Airline

A tracker in a checked suitcase gives real peace of mind. If the bag doesn't come down the carousel, you can see whether it's still at your departure airport or already at your destination — and now you can share that location directly with many airlines.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

Instead of only describing your bag to the airline, you can send them a secure link that shows where it actually is.

Packing the tracker

- Put the tag in an **outside fabric pocket** or a luggage-tag holder. Google notes that aluminum or carbon-fiber suitcases can block the signal.
- Tracker coin batteries are allowed in checked and carry-on bags; Google states the Pixel Tag's CR2032 meets airline safety rules.
- Before the trip, check that the battery isn't low.

iPhone: Share Item Location

1. When the bag is missing, file a report with the airline as usual.
2. Open **Find My**, tap **Items**, and tap the bag's AirTag.
3. Scroll to the **Lost** section and tap **Share Item Location**. (This shares the location; it does not turn on Lost Mode.)
4. Send the link to the airline the way they ask — often through their app or website.

Android: Share item location in Find Hub

1. Open **Find Hub** and tap the bag's tag. (This option appears only when the tag isn't nearby.)
2. Tap **Share item location**, then **Share item location** again.
3. Copy the web link and paste it into your airline's app or form.
4. To stop sharing, open the tag, tap **Share item location**, then **Stop sharing**.

GOOD TO KNOW

How long the link lasts

Google's link expires automatically after **7 days**, or as soon as you get the item back. Apple's works the same way, according to coverage of the feature. Anyone with the link can see the bag's location until then, so give it only to the airline.

CHAPTER 23

A Tracker in the Car: Honest Expectations

People often ask whether they can hide a tracker in the car to catch a thief. It's worth being honest: these tags were not designed for that, and in some ways they're designed to prevent it.

What it can help with

- **Finding your car in a big parking lot** — at the mall, the stadium or the airport.
- **Keeping a tag in the glove box** so a family member who shares it can see where the car was last parked.

Why it's a weak anti-theft tool

- Unwanted-tracker alerts are built into iPhones and Android phones. A thief carrying a phone may be notified that an unknown tracker is traveling with them, and the tag may start to beep.
- The location only updates when a participating phone passes near the car.
- Google's own Find Hub guidance says locator tags shouldn't be used to locate stolen items.

STAY SAFE

Never go after a stolen car yourself

If your car is stolen, call the police and tell them you have a tracker. Share the information with them. Don't drive to the location or confront anyone — no car is worth your safety.

TIP

Better options for a car

Many newer cars have a connected-car app from the manufacturer that shows where the car is. Ask your dealer, or check your owner's manual, before buying anything extra.

CHAPTER 24

Trackers on Pets: Read This First

It's natural to want to clip a tracker to a dog's collar. Some makers even suggest it. But it's important to understand the limits before you rely on one.

The honest limits

- A Bluetooth tag only updates when a participating phone passes by. A dog running through fields or woods may not be near any phone at all.
- There's no live tracking — you see where the pet *was*, not where it is.
- Google's guidance says locator tags shouldn't be used to track pets.
- A tag that comes loose is a swallowing hazard. Samsung warns that a SmartTag3 that detaches may pose a swallowing hazard to pets and young children; the coin battery inside is especially dangerous.

GOOD TO KNOW

Where a tag can help

Around the house and yard, a tag on the collar can help you find a cat napping in a closet. Samsung's SmartTag3 Place Notification can alert you when a tagged item leaves an area you set, like the yard — though Samsung calls it a trial feature and says notifications may be delayed or missed.

TIP

For real peace of mind

For a dog that roams, ask your veterinarian about a **microchip** (if your pet doesn't have one) and consider a **GPS pet tracker** with its own cellular service. Those usually need a monthly plan, but they're built for the job.

STAY SAFE

Fasten it securely

If you do use a tag, put it in a sturdy, fully enclosed holder made for collars, and check it often. If a pet ever chews or swallows a tag or battery, call your veterinarian right away.

PART 5

Loved Ones, Batteries & Fixes

A careful, honest word about trackers and a loved one with memory loss, how to change batteries safely, and what to do when a tag misbehaves.

CHAPTER 25

A Loved One with Memory Loss: Honest Limits

If someone you love lives with dementia or memory loss, the worry about them wandering is very real. It's natural to wonder whether a small tag in a coat pocket could help. This chapter gives you the honest answer, and points you toward tools that are built for the job.

Why a Bluetooth tag is the wrong tool for a person

- **It's not live.** A tag reports only when a participating phone passes nearby. In an emergency you need to know where someone is *now*, not where they were twenty minutes ago.
- **The safety system will work against you.** iPhones and Android phones are designed to alert people when an unknown tracker travels with them. Your loved one's phone, or a caregiver's, may warn about the tag, and the tag may start to beep — which can be frightening or confusing.
- **The makers say not to.** Apple states AirTags should not be used to track people, and that tracking people without their consent is a crime in many places.

The question of consent

Even with the best intentions, secretly tracking an adult raises real questions of dignity and trust. Whenever possible, talk it over with your loved one while they can take part in the decision, and include whoever holds their health care power of attorney. A plan everyone agrees to is far kinder, and usually works better, than a hidden tag.

Better tools to consider

Option	Why it's better
Medical alert device with GPS	A pendant or wristband with its own cellular service, live location and a button that reaches a 24-hour response center. Many also offer fall detection.
Location sharing on their phone	If your loved one carries a phone, they can choose to share their location with you in Find My (iPhone) or Google Maps (Android). It's live, and it's with their knowledge.
A smartwatch with cellular	Some smartwatches can share location and call for help without a phone nearby.
Their doctor and local agencies	Ask their doctor, or your local Area Agency on Aging, about wandering-prevention programs and support for caregivers.

TIP

There's a guide for that

Bill's Complete Manuals include a separate guide, **Medical Alert & Fall Detection**, that walks through these devices, what they cost, and how to choose one.

STAY SAFE

If someone is missing, call 911 right away

Don't spend precious time checking a tracker app first. Call 911, tell them the person has memory loss, and share any location information you have while help is on the way.

CHAPTER 26

How to Change the Battery Safely

Most trackers run on a **CR2032** lithium coin battery — the same flat, nickel-sized battery used in car key fobs and bathroom scales. It lasts about a year in an AirTag or Pixel Tag; Samsung rates the SmartTag3 at up to 550 days in normal use.

STAY SAFE

Coin batteries are dangerous if swallowed

Apple's battery page puts it plainly: a swallowed coin battery can cause internal chemical burns in as little as two hours, and death or serious injury can occur. Keep new and used batteries out of reach of children and pets. If you suspect one has been swallowed, seek medical help immediately — call 911 or go to the emergency room.

How you'll know it's time

- **AirTag:** your iPhone shows a low-battery notification, and "Low Battery" appears under the AirTag's name in Find My > Items.
- **Find Hub tags:** the battery level under the tag's name shows OK, Low or Very Low. Replace it at Low.
- **SmartTag and Tile:** check the tag's details in the SmartThings or Tile app.

To replace an AirTag battery

1. Press down on the polished stainless steel cover and turn it **counterclockwise** until it stops.
2. Lift off the cover and take out the old battery.
3. Put in a new **CR2032** lithium 3V coin battery with the **positive (+) side facing up**. You'll hear a sound when it connects.
4. Line up the three tabs on the cover with the three slots on the AirTag.
5. Turn the cover **clockwise** until it stops.

HEADS UP

About "bitter-coated" batteries

Some CR2032 batteries have a bitter coating to discourage children from swallowing them, and Apple suggests one, like the Duracell 2032 with Bitter Coating. But Apple also warns that some bitter-coated batteries might not work in AirTag. Look for a package that says **Compatible with Apple AirTag**.

TIP

Dispose of old batteries safely

Put a piece of tape over both sides of the old battery and take it to a battery recycling drop-off. Never leave it loose on a counter or in a junk drawer where little hands can find it.

CHAPTER 27

When a Tracker Won't Cooperate

Trackers are simple, so problems usually have simple causes: the phone's settings, a weak battery, or too many tags close together. Work down this list before you worry.

It won't set up

Problem	Try this
AirTag card never appears	Update iOS (2nd-generation AirTag needs 26.2.1 or later). Turn on Bluetooth. Lock and wake the iPhone and wait 15 seconds. Try Find My > Items > Add.
"More than one AirTag detected"	Move the other AirTags away. Set them up one at a time.
"New items cannot be added"	Find My holds up to 32 items, counting shared items and AirPods. Remove one you don't use.
Pixel Tag card doesn't appear	Remove the battery tab completely. Look in Settings > Connected devices, or Find Hub > Add Device. Turn Bluetooth off and on.
SmartTag won't pair	Update SmartThings, press the tag's button, and try two or three times.

It won't show a location

- Check that Location Services (iPhone) or Location (Android) is on, and that the finding app is allowed to use it.
- Remember the map shows the **last known** location — if no participating phone has passed by, there's nothing new to show.
- On iPhone, a location older than seven days becomes "No location found."
- Replace the battery if it's low or more than a year old.

Starting over

If a tag still misbehaves, remove it from the app and set it up again. On iPhone, tap the item in Find My and choose **Remove Item**. In Find Hub, open the tag, tap **Settings**, then **Remove from Find Hub**. For a stubborn tag, the maker's site explains how to reset it.

TIP

Selling or giving away a tag

Always remove a tag from your account before you pass it on. Otherwise it stays linked to you, and the new owner can't set it up.

PART 6

Safety, Privacy & Getting Help

Unwanted-tracker alerts on iPhone and Android, what to do if you get one, staying safe, protecting your privacy — and when to call Bill.

CHAPTER 28

Unwanted-Tracker Alerts: How They Work

Because trackers are so small, someone could misuse one by slipping it into another person's bag or car. To guard against that, Apple and Google worked together on an industry standard so that phones on **both** iPhone and Android can warn you if an unknown tracker seems to be traveling with you — no matter which brand it is.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What it does for you

If a tracker that isn't yours is moving with you over time, your phone tells you, shows you on a map where it was detected with you, and helps you find it.

Make sure alerts are on — iPhone

1. Update to iOS 17.5 or later (alerts for other brands' trackers need it).
2. Open **Settings > Privacy & Security > Location Services** and turn Location Services on.
3. On the same screen, tap **System Services** and turn on **Significant Locations**.
4. Open **Settings > Bluetooth** and turn Bluetooth on.
5. Open **Settings > Notifications > Tracking Notifications** and turn on **Allow Notifications**.
6. Keep Airplane Mode off — you won't get tracking notifications while it's on.

Make sure alerts are on — Android

Unknown tracker alerts arrive automatically on Android 6 and later through Google Play services. To check, open **Settings > Safety & emergency > Unknown tracker alerts** and make sure **Allow alerts** is on. (On Android 11 and earlier: **Settings > Google > Personal & device safety > Unknown tracker alerts**.) Location should be on for automatic alerts.

GOOD TO KNOW

Innocent reasons for an alert

You might get an alert because you borrowed a family member's keys or bag, borrowed someone's AirPods, or are traveling in a car with someone else's tagged item. That's common, and it's why the alert asks you to look before you worry.

CHAPTER 29

If You Get an Alert on an iPhone

The alert might say **AirTag Found Moving With You**, **"Product Name" Found Moving With You**, **AirPods Detected**, or **Unknown Accessory Detected**. Take a breath. Here's what to do, in order.

1. Tap the alert. Find My shows a map: red dots mark where the item was detected near you.
2. Tap **Continue**, then **Play Sound**. Listen, and play it again if you need more time.
3. If it's an AirTag and your iPhone has Ultra Wideband, tap **Find** (Find Nearby) and follow the distance and direction on screen.
4. If you can't hear it, check your pockets, bags, jacket, the outside pockets of luggage, and your car.
5. If you find it, hold the top of your iPhone near the white side of an AirTag. Tap the notification to see its serial number and the last four digits of the owner's phone number. Take a screenshot.
6. To stop it sharing its location, tap **Instructions to Disable** and follow the steps.

STAY SAFE

Your safety comes first

If you can't find the device and you feel your safety is at risk, Apple's advice is to go to a safe public place and contact law enforcement. Police can request information about the item from Apple.

HEADS UP

Turning off Bluetooth doesn't stop it

Apple is clear: turning off Bluetooth or Location Services on your iPhone does **not** stop the owner from seeing where their AirTag is. Only disabling the item does that.

TIP

Review past alerts

In **Find My**, tap **Items**, scroll to the bottom and tap **Unknown Items Detected with You** to see items that triggered an alert. You can also tap **Identify Found Item** there.

CHAPTER 30

If You Get an Alert on an Android Phone

On Android, the notification tells you a tracker that isn't yours might be moving with you. It works with Find Hub tags, compatible headphones and Apple AirTags.

1. Tap the notification to open a map of where the tracker was detected traveling with you.
2. Tap **Play sound**. The owner is **not** notified when you do this. Follow the sound.
3. For Find Hub tags, tap **Next steps**, then **Find nearby** — the shape fills in as you get closer.
4. When you find it, tap **Next steps** to save its information and see how to turn it off.
5. For an AirTag, hold it near the back of your phone to see its details. Take screenshots of everything.

Scan for trackers yourself

You can check at any time: open **Settings > Safety & emergency > Unknown tracker alerts** and tap **Scan now**. The scan takes about 10 seconds. Past alerts are listed on the same screen for 48 hours.

HEADS UP

Think before you turn a tracker off

Google points out two things. Turning off some trackers resets them, so police can no longer learn who owns them. And depending on your situation, turning it off could alert the person or feel unsafe. If you're worried, keep it and talk to the police first.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pause instead

For Find Hub tags you can tap **I can't find the tracker**, then **Temporarily pause**, to stop your phone's location from being used to locate that tracker for up to 24 hours.

CHAPTER 31

Stalking Safety & When to Call the Police

Most tracker alerts have an innocent explanation. But if you have any reason to believe someone is following or watching you — an ex-partner, a family conflict, a stranger who seems too interested — take an alert seriously. You have every right to feel safe.

Call 911 if

- You feel you're in danger right now.
- You find a tracker and someone has threatened you, or you think you're being followed.
- You find a tracker hidden on your car or in your belongings that nobody in your household knows about.

Steps that protect you

1. Go to a safe, public place — a police station, a busy store, a fire station.
2. Take screenshots of the alert, the map, and the tracker's serial number or identifier.
3. Keep the tracker if it's safe to do so. Police may ask for it and its serial number.
4. Report it to your local police. Apple says police can request information about an AirTag from Apple; Google says police may ask you for the tracker and its identifier.
5. Tell someone you trust what's happening.

Help is available

Who	How to reach them
Emergency	Call **911**.
National Domestic Violence Hotline	Call **1-800-799-7233** or text START to 88788. Free, confidential, 24 hours.
Safety Net Project (NNEDV)	Tech-safety resources for survivors at **techsafety.org** — recommended by both Apple and Google.

STAY SAFE

If someone may be checking your phone

If you think an abuser has access to your phone, consider using a trusted friend's phone or a library computer to look for help. Apple's **Safety Check** on iPhone (in **Settings > Privacy & Security**) can help you review who you share with.

CHAPTER 32

Privacy: Who Can See Where Your Things Are

It's fair to wonder who else can see your tracker's location. The good news is that the big finding networks were designed with privacy at the center.

Network	What the maker says
Apple Find My	Uses end-to-end encryption, and AirTags use Bluetooth identifiers that change frequently. Apple says the network is anonymous and encrypted.
Google Find Hub	Location data is end-to-end encrypted. Google says it can't see your tag's location — only you and people you share with can.
Samsung	Samsung says SmartTag location data is encrypted.
Tile and Life360	Your Tiles are tied to your Tile or Life360 account. Review who you share with in the app.

Who you've let in

- **People you share with** can see the item's location. Review the list now and then.
- **Anyone with a Share Item Location link** can see the item until the link expires — give it only to the airline.
- **Anyone who finds a tag in Lost Mode** can see the contact details you entered.

SCAM ALERT

The "I found your keys" reward trick

Lost Mode shows your phone number to whoever finds your tag. Most finders are kind. But if a "finder" demands payment by gift card, wire transfer or a payment app before returning your item, or asks for a code sent to your phone, stop. Offer to meet at a police station or ask them to drop it at one.

SCAM ALERT

Fake tracker apps

Get tracker apps only from your phone's official app store: Find My is built into iPhone, Find Hub and SmartThings come from Google Play or the Galaxy Store, and Tile and Life360 from the official stores. Never install an app because a pop-up or a caller told you to.

TIP

Clean up old tags

Remove tags you no longer use from your app. It keeps your list tidy and means nothing old is still linked to your account.

CHAPTER 33

When to Call Bill

This guide is meant to help you use trackers confidently and safely on your own. But you should never feel you have to puzzle through something worrying by yourself. Here's when a call makes good sense.

Good reasons to call

- You've got a new tracker (or several) and would like a patient hand setting them up and practicing finding things — that's exactly what my **Device Training** sessions are for.
- You're buying trackers as gifts and want to be sure they match everyone's phones.
- You'd like to share tags across the family, or set up luggage tags before a big trip.
- Your phone showed an unknown-tracker alert and you'd like calm help checking your bag or car.
- A tag won't set up, won't show a location, or won't come off someone else's account.
- You're caring for a loved one and want to talk through location-sharing and medical alert options.

SCAM ALERT

A two-minute call beats a costly mistake

If anyone pressures you to pay to get an item back, to install an app, or to read out a code, stop and call me first at **(330) 200-8042**. And if you ever feel unsafe, call 911 before you call me.

How to reach me

I'm Bill, and I help folks right here in **Portage County, Ohio**. Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a visit at **billshometech.com/book**. If you reach my assistant **Sophie** on the main line, she can answer simple questions and get you on my schedule. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. With 30+ years of professional experience, I promise there's no question too basic.

FROM BILL

This guide is yours to keep

The guides are free to read and share. When you'd like a person beside you, I'm a phone call away.

— Bill

CHAPTER 34

Your Bluetooth Tracker Cheat-Sheet

The steps you'll reach for most, all in one place.

iPhone and AirTag

I want to…	Do this
Set up an AirTag	Hold it next to your unlocked iPhone, tap **Connect**, pick a name, tap **Done**.
Make it chime	Find My > Items > tap it > **Play**.
Follow the arrow	Find My > Items > tap it > **Find** (iPhone 15 and later).
Lost Mode	Find My > Items > tap it > Lost section > **Lost Mode**.
Share with family	Find My > Items > tap it > **Add Person** (up to five).
Lost luggage	Find My > Items > tap it > **Share Item Location**.

Android, Find Hub and Samsung

I want to…	Do this
Find or ring a tag	Find Hub > tap the tag > **Play sound** or **Find nearby**.
Share a tag	Find Hub > tap the tag > **Share ownership** (up to 10).
Lost luggage	Find Hub > tap the tag > **Share item location**.
Find a SmartTag	SmartThings > **Life** > **Find**.
Scan for unknown trackers	Settings > Safety & emergency > Unknown tracker alerts > **Scan now**.

Staying safe — the short list

1. Keep coin batteries away from children and pets. If one is swallowed, get medical help immediately.
2. Trackers are for things, not people.
3. Got an alert? Play the sound, check your belongings, take screenshots.
4. Feel unsafe? Go somewhere public and call the police.
5. Never pay a "finder" with gift cards or wires.
6. When unsure, pause and call Bill.

Keep this handy

Item	Notes
My phone and finding app	_____
My tags and what they're on	_____
People I share tags with	_____
Battery last changed	_____
Bill's Home Tech	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book

FROM BILL

You've got this

A tracker is one of the friendliest gadgets you can own. Set it up once, practice finding it, change the battery once a year — and call me any time you'd like a hand.

— Bill