BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

GPS Trackers & Alerts for Memory Loss

Location sharing, wearable GPS and door alerts — explained in plain English, with dignity and care

A plain-English guide for families and caregivers

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Find My, Find Hub, Life360, Apple Watch, AngelSense, SmartSole & more · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to helping a person living with memory loss stay safe while keeping as much independence as they can: location sharing on the phone they already carry, wearable GPS, gentle alerts at home, and community programs. Read it in any order and at your own pace. Every tool comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow, step-by-step directions. And if someone is ever missing, skip straight to Chapter 22: call 911.

Part 1 — Getting Started

1 A Note from Bill
2 Why Getting Lost Is So Common
3 Talking It Over: Consent, Dignity & Choices
4 Layers of Safety: Choosing What Fits

Part 2 — Location Sharing on the Phone They Already Carry

5 iPhone: Sharing Location with Find My
6 Android: Find Hub & Google Location Sharing
7 Life360 for Families
8 Arrive & Leave Alerts (Geofences)

Part 3 — Wearable GPS: Watches, Insoles & Pendants

9 Apple Watch for a Family Member
10 Dedicated GPS Watches & Trackers
11 AngelSense
12 GPS SmartSole Insoles

Part 4 — Pendants, Tags & Alerts at Home

13 Medical-Alert Pendants & Watches with GPS
14 AirTags & Other Tags: Useful, but Not for People
15 Door Chimes & Open-Door Alerts
16 Bed-Exit & Motion Alerts at Night

Part 5 — Keeping It All Working

17 Who Answers the Alerts
18 Charging Routines That Stick
19 When the Map Stops Updating

Part 6 — Community Help & Emergencies

20 Project Lifesaver & Local Law-Enforcement Programs
21 MedicAlert ID & Safe & Found
22 If Someone Goes Missing: Call 911
23 The Alzheimer's Association & Support for You

Part 7 — Staying Safe, Getting Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

24 Scams, Privacy & Respect
25 When to Call Bill
26 Your GPS Trackers & Alerts Cheat-Sheet

PART 1

Getting Started

Why getting lost is so common with memory loss, how to talk it over with the person you care for, and how to choose the right mix of tools. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If someone you love is living with memory loss, you may already know the feeling: a walk that took longer than it should have, a drive to the store that ended somewhere unexpected, or a front door found open at two in the morning. This guide is for **you** — the spouse, the son or daughter, the neighbor or friend who wants to help that person stay safe without taking away the independence they still have.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help families here in Portage County feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it at your kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, and without trying to sell you anything. I'm not a doctor, and nothing here is medical advice. What I can do is explain the gadgets and settings honestly — what they do well, and where they fall short.

What this guide will do for you

- Explain, kindly and plainly, why people living with dementia sometimes leave home unexpectedly or get lost.
- Help you talk it over with the person you care for, and with their doctor, while they can take part.
- Walk you through location sharing on the phone they already carry: iPhone Find My, Google Find Hub and Life360.
- Give an honest look at wearable GPS: the Apple Watch, GPS watches, AngelSense, GPS SmartSole insoles and medical-alert pendants with GPS.
- Explain why AirTags and other tags are not a real-time tracker for a person.
- Show you simple door, bed and motion alerts for home.
- Explain Project Lifesaver, MedicAlert and the Alzheimer's Association's help.
- Tell you exactly what to do if someone goes missing: **call 911**.

The big promise: you can't break anything

Every setting in this guide can be changed or turned back off. If an alert is too noisy, you quiet it. If a watch isn't the right fit, you try something else. Take it one step at a time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

The right few tools, set up thoughtfully, can mean less worry for you and more freedom for the person you care for — a walk around the block that doesn't have to end in an argument, and a quicker answer to "Where is Dad right now?"

STAY SAFE

The one thing to remember

If a person living with dementia is missing, **call 911**. Don't wait to see if they come back, and don't wait for an app to update. Chapter 22 has the full checklist.

And I'm only a phone call away

If anything here leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question, and this is a subject that deserves patience.

Let's begin with why getting lost happens at all.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Why Getting Lost Is So Common

Getting lost, or leaving home unexpectedly, is one of the most common changes that come with memory loss. People sometimes call it **wandering**, but that word can make it sound aimless. Very often the person has a reason that makes perfect sense to them: going to work, picking up the children, going "home" to a house they lived in years ago, or simply getting some air.

What the Alzheimer's Association says

- Anyone who has memory problems and is able to walk is at risk of getting lost.
- Six in 10 people living with dementia will wander — leave or get lost — at least once, and many do so more than once.
- It can happen early on, not only in later stages.

Early signs worth noticing

- Coming back later than usual from a regular walk or drive.
- Forgetting the way to familiar places.
- Talking about going "home" while already at home, or about old duties like going to work.
- Restlessness, pacing or repeating the same movements.
- Trouble finding familiar rooms, such as the bathroom.
- Seeming lost or anxious in new, changed or crowded places like stores and restaurants.

GOOD TO KNOW

It isn't anyone's fault

Getting lost is a symptom, not stubbornness and not a failure of care. The kindest frame is the true one: the person is trying to meet a need. Tools help, but so does asking, gently, "Where were you headed?"

TIP

Talk with their doctor

If getting lost is new, or happening more often, tell the person's doctor. The doctor knows their whole health picture and can suggest next steps and local support. Bring a short list of when and where it happened.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Spotting the early signs gives you time to set things up calmly, together, before there's an emergency.

CHAPTER 3

Talking It Over: Consent, Dignity & Choices

Location tools work best — and feel best — when the person wearing or carrying them has had a say. Memory loss doesn't take away a person's right to be treated as an adult. Involve them while they can take part in the decision, and keep involving them in whatever ways they still can.

Starting the conversation

1. Pick a calm, unhurried time — not right after a scare.
2. Talk about what *they* want: keeping their walks, their drives, their independence.
3. Offer the tool as something that protects that freedom: "If you ever get turned around, we can find you and bring you home."
4. Show them the device or setting. Let them hold the watch or see the map.
5. Ask what feels okay. A watch may feel natural; a pendant may not. Some prefer their own phone.
6. Agree on who can see their location, and write it down.

Questions families often weigh

- **Open or hidden?** Telling the person is the respectful starting point. Some families later choose a less visible device when the person keeps taking one off. If it comes to that, talk it through with the doctor and the family, and keep the person's dignity at the center.
- **Who sees the location?** Fewer people is usually better. One or two trusted family members is plenty.
- **When do we look?** Many families agree to check only when something seems wrong, not all day long.
- **What about driving?** That is a separate, important conversation — usually with the doctor's help.

GOOD TO KNOW

Plan ahead while you can

Families often find it helps to have legal and health-care paperwork in order early, such as a power of attorney and a health-care proxy. An attorney can explain what applies in Ohio. The Alzheimer's Association's 24/7 Helpline, **800-272-3900**, can also point you to local help.

HEADS UP

Tracking an adult without consent

Secretly tracking another adult can be a serious invasion of privacy, and in some situations it may be against the law. Keep the person and their legal decision-maker in the loop.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A tool the person agreed to is a tool they're far more likely to wear, carry and charge — which is what makes it work when it matters.

CHAPTER 4

Layers of Safety: Choosing What Fits

There is no single perfect gadget. Most families do best with two or three layers: something that shows location away from home, something that alerts you at home, and a plan for an emergency.

Option	Good for	Watch out for
Location sharing on their phone	People who still carry and charge a phone	Phone left at home or dead
Apple Watch for a family member	People who'll wear a watch daily	Daily charging; cellular model needed
Dedicated GPS watch or tracker	Simple, caregiver-focused alerts	Device cost plus a monthly fee
GPS insole (SmartSole)	People who remove watches	Only works in that pair of shoes
Medical-alert pendant with GPS	Call-for-help button plus location	Monthly fee; must be worn
AirTag or other tag	Finding keys, bags, a car	Not real-time; not meant for people
Door, bed and motion alerts	Knowing when someone leaves at night	Only works at home
Project Lifesaver	Radio search by trained local responders	Only where your sheriff offers it
MedicAlert ID	Helping strangers and responders	Must be worn; yearly plan

Three questions to choose by

1. **What will they actually wear or carry every day?** The best device is the one that's on them.
2. **Who will charge it?** A watch that needs charging every night needs a person and a routine (Chapter 18).
3. **What will you do with an alert?** Decide in advance who answers it, day and night.

TIP

Start with what you have

If your loved one already carries a phone, turning on location sharing (Part 2) costs nothing and takes minutes. A door chime (Chapter 15) is inexpensive. Add more only if you need it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Layers mean that if one thing fails — a dead battery, a phone left on the counter — something else still has your back.

PART 2

Location Sharing on the Phone They Already Carry

If your loved one carries a phone, you may not need to buy anything. Here's how to share location on an iPhone, on an Android phone and with Life360 — and how to get an alert when they leave home.

CHAPTER 5

iPhone: Sharing Location with Find My

Every iPhone has **Find My** built in. With it, the person you care for can share their location with you, and you can see it on a map on your own iPhone, iPad or Mac. It's free, and it's the same location the phone already knows.

Set it up on their iPhone, together

1. On *their* iPhone, open the **Find My** app.
2. Tap **People**, then tap **Add** (the plus sign) and choose **Share My Location**.
3. Type your name or phone number and tap **Send**.
4. Choose **Share Indefinitely**, so it doesn't stop after an hour or at the end of the day.
5. On *your* iPhone, open Find My, tap **People**, and you'll see them on the map.

If you're in the same Family Sharing group

Families who already use Family Sharing can turn on location from **Settings** > **Family** > **Location Sharing**. Family members can then also help locate the person's devices, play a sound on a lost iPhone and turn on Lost Mode.

HEADS UP

Settings that quietly stop sharing

Find My has a **Hide Location** choice and a **Share My Location** switch on the **Me** tab. If either is turned off, you'll stop seeing them. Deleting the Find My app does *not* stop sharing, but turning off Location Services does. Check these first if the dot goes gray.

TIP

Make it the phone they really use

On the person's iPhone, go to **Settings** > their name > **Find My**, and make sure **My Location** is set to **This iPhone** — not an old iPad left in a drawer.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One tap shows you where they are, for free, using a phone they already know how to carry.

CHAPTER 6

Android: Find Hub & Google Location Sharing

On Android phones, Google's **Find Hub** app (it used to be called Find My Device) can now share a person's location with family and friends, not just find lost phones. Google Maps uses the same Google Location Sharing behind the scenes.

Share location from their phone with Find Hub

1. On *their* phone, open the **Find Hub** app. If it isn't there, install it from the Play Store.
2. Tap the **People** tab at the bottom.
3. Tap the **+** button.
4. Choose how long to share: for an hour, for the rest of the day, or until it's stopped. Choose **until you stop**.
5. Pick your name from the suggested list (or tap the magnifying glass to search their contacts), then tap **Create share**.

What you need

- A Google Account signed in on their phone, with Location turned on.
- An internet connection — Wi-Fi or cell data.
- On your side, the Find Hub app or Google Maps on your phone, signed in to your Google Account.

GOOD TO KNOW

Where to stop or check sharing

On the phone: **Settings** > **Location** > **Location services** > **Google Location Sharing**. On a computer: myaccount.google.com > **People & sharing** > **Location Sharing**. Menus vary a little by phone maker.

HEADS UP

Battery savers can get in the way

Strong battery-saving modes can slow location updates. If the location often looks hours old, check the phone's battery settings, and keep it charged (Chapter 18).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Free, built into the phone, and it works across Android and iPhone through Google Maps.

CHAPTER 7

Life360 for Families

Life360 is a family location app that works on both iPhone and Android. Everyone joins a private group called a **Circle**. Many families like it because the alerts are easy to set up and everyone sees the same map, whatever phone they own.

Plans and prices, as of November 2026

Plan	Monthly price	Highlights
Free	No cost	Live map, 2 days of history, 2 Place alerts
Silver	$9.99	7 days of history, 5 Places
Gold	$16.99	30 days of history, unlimited Places, emergency dispatch
Platinum	$24.99	Everything in Gold, plus extras

One plan covers the whole Circle, and yearly billing costs less. Life360 offers a 7-day free trial on paid plans; set a reminder if you don't want to keep paying.

Getting started

1. Install Life360 on your phone and on your loved one's phone.
2. On your phone, create a Circle and tap **Send Code** to invite them.
3. On their phone, choose **Join a Circle** and type the code. Codes expire after 72 hours.
4. Give the app the permissions it asks for, including location **Always** or **Allow all the time**. Without that, the map won't stay current.

GOOD TO KNOW

Battery

Life360 says the app typically shortens battery life by about 10% over 24 hours, depending on use. Plan on charging every night.

TIP

The free plan may be enough

Two Place alerts — say, "Home" and a daughter's house — cover what many families need. Try free first.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One app the whole family can share, on any phone, with simple arrive-and-leave alerts.

CHAPTER 8

Arrive & Leave Alerts (Geofences)

A **geofence** is just an invisible circle drawn around a place on the map — home, a day program, a favorite coffee shop. When the person's phone or tracker crosses that line, you get a notification. This is often more useful than watching the map, because it tells you when something has changed.

iPhone Find My: Notify Me

1. Open **Find My** and tap **People**.
2. Tap the person's name, then under **Notifications** tap **Add**.
3. Choose **Notify Me**, then pick when: they **arrive**, **leave** or **aren't at** a place at a certain time.
4. Pick the place and choose one time or every time. Recurring alerts are sent to the other person to accept.

Android Find Hub

When someone shares their location with you in Find Hub, open the **People** tab, tap their profile and tap **Get location notifications**. Choose **Arrives**, **Leaves** or both, and pick the address — home, for example. The person gets an email letting them know you set it up, which keeps things open and honest. If alerts don't come, make sure their location is on and your Find Hub app is up to date.

Life360 Places

1. Tap the **Places** icon and choose a place, or **Add a new Place**.
2. Set the size of the circle — anywhere from 250 feet to 2 miles.
3. Turn on **Arrives** and **Leaves** alerts for the person.
4. Tap **Save**.

> **TIP**
>
> **Make the home circle small**
>
> A large circle around home means they could be several blocks away before you hear anything. A smaller one alerts you sooner. Try it and adjust.

HEADS UP

Alerts aren't instant

Phones check their location every so often to save battery, so an alert may arrive a few minutes after the person actually left. Treat a geofence alert as a reason to check, not a guarantee.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You don't have to keep looking at a map. Your phone taps you on the shoulder when it matters.

PART 3

Wearable GPS: Watches, Insoles & Pendants

When a phone gets left on the counter, something worn on the body can still show where a person is. An honest look at the Apple Watch, GPS watches, AngelSense, GPS SmartSole insoles, medical-alert pendants — and why AirTags are a different thing altogether.

CHAPTER 9

Apple Watch for a Family Member

An Apple Watch can be set up for someone who doesn't have their own iPhone, and managed from *your* iPhone. Apple used to call this **Family Setup**; it is now called **Apple Watch For Your Kids**. Don't let the new name put you off — Apple describes it as being for family members who don't have their own iPhone, and many families use it for an older parent.

What you need, as of November 2026

- **Your** iPhone, and you need to be the organizer or a parent/guardian in a Family Sharing group.
- The person you care for added to that Family Sharing group.
- A **cellular** Apple Watch. With watchOS 27, Apple lists the Apple Watch SE 3 or Apple Watch Series 9 or later. A GPS-only watch won't do; it needs its own connection when your iPhone isn't nearby.
- A cellular plan for the watch for some features, such as calls. The watch can use a different carrier from yours.

Setting it up, in general terms

1. Sit down together with the watch and your iPhone. Explain what you're doing and why.
2. Put the watch on the person's wrist and turn it on. Hold it near your iPhone.
3. On your iPhone, when the Apple Watch app asks, choose to set it up for a family member.
4. Follow the prompts: choose the family member, set up the cellular plan, and pick the settings.
5. When it's done, open **Find My** on your iPhone and check that you can see the watch on the map.

GOOD TO KNOW

Features vary

Some watch features depend on the person's age, the region and whether the watch has a cellular plan. Check Apple's page "Set up Apple Watch for a family member" before you buy, and ask the store about anything you're unsure of.

TIP

Arrive and leave alerts work here too

Once the watch shows in Find My, you can add **Notify Me** alerts just as you would for a phone (Chapter 8).

HEADS UP

Daily charging

An Apple Watch generally needs charging every day. That's the biggest reason a watch stops helping. Chapter 18 has a charging routine that works for many families.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A familiar-looking watch — not a medical device — that shows location, can call you, and can call for help, all looked after from your own iPhone.

CHAPTER 10

Dedicated GPS Watches & Trackers

Several companies make GPS watches and small trackers built for caregivers rather than for fitness. They usually have fewer buttons, simpler screens and a caregiver app. One example made for older adults is the **Theora Connect** watch from Theora Care. There are others, and models come and go.

What these devices usually offer

- A map in a caregiver app on your phone.
- Safe-zone (geofence) alerts when the person leaves an area.
- An SOS button that calls or alerts family.
- Sometimes a way to call the watch, or fall alerts as an add-on.
- Sometimes a clasp or band that's harder to slip off.

Questions to ask before you buy

1. What is the device price, and what is the **monthly** plan? Is there a contract?
2. Which cell network does it use, and does it work well where you live?
3. How long does the battery really last, and how does it charge?
4. What happens when the battery is low — who gets told?
5. Can you return it if it doesn't suit the person?

GOOD TO KNOW

Prices change often

I couldn't confirm current prices for these watches from the makers, and review sites disagree. Expect a device cost plus a monthly service plan. Get the price in writing before you order.

TIP

Comfort first

A watch that looks like a regular watch is more likely to stay on. Let the person choose the band or color if you can.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Simple alerts aimed at caregivers, without needing the person to manage a smartphone.

CHAPTER 11

AngelSense

AngelSense is a GPS tracker with its own caregiver app and service. It was first known for helping families of children with special needs, and the company also offers it for people living with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The small device is worn on the body or clothing.

What AngelSense includes

- Location on a map in the AngelSense app, with alerts when routines change.
- **Two-way voice** calls, and a **one-way voice** ("listen-in") feature to hear what's happening around the device. All plans include 60 voice minutes a month.
- Plan types: pay for a year up front, pay monthly with a one-year contract, or month-to-month with an activation fee of $59. Taxes are extra.
- A 30-day money-back guarantee.

GOOD TO KNOW

Price

AngelSense's own pages and outside reviews give different monthly prices. Check angelsense.com for the current plan price, and ask about the device price and any contract before you agree.

HEADS UP

Listen-in deserves a real conversation

Being able to hear what's going on around someone is a big step for an adult's privacy. Talk it over with the person, their doctor and the family first (Chapter 3). Some families decide to use it only in an emergency.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Detailed alerts and the ability to talk with the person, from one service built for caregivers.

CHAPTER 12

GPS SmartSole Insoles

The **GPS SmartSole** from GTX Corp is a GPS tracker hidden inside a shoe insole. You trim it to fit and slip it into a pair of shoes the person wears every day. Some families choose it when a person living with dementia takes off watches or pendants.

How it works

- The insole needs a **monitoring service plan** to send its location. The maker advertises no long-term contract and says you can cancel any time.
- You set up **geozones** — circles around addresses — and get an email or text when the insole goes in or out of one.
- You charge it by lining up the charger on the right insole.
- The maker suggests testing the connection where you live as soon as it arrives, and offers a refund if coverage isn't good enough.
- Some insurance plans reimburse the insole or the plan. Ask yours.

HEADS UP

It only works in those shoes

If the person heads out in slippers or a different pair, the insole stays home. It helps to keep the SmartSole pair right by the door and gently steer toward them.

TIP

Make charging part of bedtime

Plan on charging the insole every night while the shoes are off (Chapter 18). Check the current price and plan on gpssmartsole.com before you order.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Location help that doesn't depend on remembering a watch, phone or pendant.

PART 4

Pendants, Tags & Alerts at Home

Medical-alert pendants with GPS, the honest truth about AirTags, and simple door, bed and motion alerts that let you know when someone is up and about at night.

CHAPTER 13

Medical-Alert Pendants & Watches with GPS

A **mobile medical-alert** device is a pendant, clip or watch with a help button. Press it and the person is connected to a 24/7 monitoring center that can see roughly where they are, call family and send help. Because it has GPS and a cell connection, it works away from home too.

Examples you'll see, as of November 2026

- Medical Guardian's **MGMini**.
- Bay Alarm Medical's **SOS Micro**.
- MobileHelp's **Solo**.
- Review sites list these at roughly $25 to $50 a month, sometimes with an equipment fee. Fall detection is often an add-on for a few dollars more.

Good questions for any medical-alert company

1. Can family see the location in an app, or only the monitoring center?
2. Is there a contract or cancellation fee?
3. How long does the battery last, and does it warn when it's low?
4. Does it work on the cell network where you live?
5. Is fall detection included or extra?

GOOD TO KNOW

Pressing the button is the hard part

A help button needs the person to remember to press it. For someone living with memory loss, that may not happen. These devices work best alongside family location alerts, not instead of them.

SCAM ALERT

"Free medical alert" phone calls

Robocalls offering a "free" medical-alert system, or saying a family member already ordered one, are a known scam the FTC has acted against. Hang up, don't press any numbers, and shop directly with a company you chose.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A real person answers, day or night, and knows where to send help.

CHAPTER 14

AirTags & Other Tags: Useful, but Not for People

It's tempting to slip an Apple AirTag, Tile, Samsung SmartTag or Google Pixel Tag into a coat pocket. Families do ask about this, so here's the plain truth: these tags are made for finding *things*.

Why a tag isn't a real tracker for a person

- Tags have no GPS of their own. They show up only when a nearby phone on the same network happens to pass by, so the location can be minutes or hours old.
- In quiet areas — a field, woods, a country road — there may be no phones nearby at all.
- The person may get an alert on their own phone that an unknown tag is traveling with them, which can be confusing and upsetting.
- Apple says AirTags should not be used to track people, and tracking a person without consent is a crime in many places.

Where tags really do help

- On the house keys, so a lost set turns up faster.
- In a purse or wallet that often goes missing.
- In the car, to find it in a big parking lot.

TIP

Use the right tool

For a person, use location sharing (Part 2) or a GPS device with its own connection (Chapters 9 to 13).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Less time spent hunting for keys and purses — and no false sense of security about the person.

CHAPTER 15

Door Chimes & Open-Door Alerts

Many times when a person living with dementia leaves unexpectedly, it starts at an outside door. A simple alert on the doors tells you the moment one opens, so you can go and see where they're headed — kindly, and without a race down the street.

The Alzheimer's Association suggests warning bells above doors, or a monitoring device that signals when a door is opened.

Choices, from simplest up

- **A bell or chime above the door.** Inexpensive and needs no setup.
- **A battery door chime.** A small sensor on the door and a plug-in chime near your bed.
- **A smart contact sensor.** Sends a notification to your phone. Works with systems like Ring, SimpliSafe, Alexa, Google Home or Apple Home.
- **A video doorbell or camera** pointed at the door, so you can see who went out.

Setting up a smart door sensor

1. Stick the two pieces of the sensor on the door and frame, lined up, as the instructions show.
2. Add it in the maker's app and name it clearly, such as "Front Door".
3. Turn on notifications for that sensor.
4. If you like, set a schedule so it only alerts you at night.
5. Open the door and check your phone buzzes. Then test it again a week later.

TIP

Every outside door

Don't forget the back door, the garage door into the house and a patio slider.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep it gentle

A loud siren can startle and upset someone. A soft chime in *your* room, or a phone alert, lets you respond calmly.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You can sleep, knowing you'll hear if a door opens.

CHAPTER 16

Bed-Exit & Motion Alerts at Night

Getting up at night is common with memory loss. A bed or motion alert lets you know someone is up, so you can help with the bathroom, a drink of water or a little reassurance before they reach the door.

The Alzheimer's Association suggests a pressure-sensitive mat at the bedside or in front of the door to alert you to movement.

Kinds of alerts

- **Pressure-sensitive mats.** When someone steps on the mat, a pager or chime sounds in your room.
- **Bed pads.** A thin pad under the mattress or sheet alerts you when the person gets up.
- **Motion sensors.** Placed in a hallway, they can send a phone alert or turn on a light.

TIP

Light the way

Pair a motion sensor with a soft night-light or a smart bulb in the hallway and bathroom. A lit path can help a person find the bathroom instead of the front door.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some mats can look like a hole

Some families find a dark mat by the door looks like a hole in the floor to the person, which can be frightening. If it seems to upset them, try a pad under a rug or a motion sensor instead.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You hear about night-time walking early, while there's still time for a calm hand on the shoulder.

PART 5

Keeping It All Working

The best tracker in the world can't help with a dead battery or an alert nobody sees. Here's how to share the job, build a charging routine and fix things when the map stops updating.

CHAPTER 17

Who Answers the Alerts

An alert is only useful if someone sees it and knows what to do. Before you switch everything on, take a few minutes as a family to decide who gets which alerts, and when.

Make a simple plan together

1. List the alerts you've set up: door chime, Find My or Find Hub alerts, Life360 Places, the GPS device's safe zones.
2. For each one, write who gets it during the day and who gets it at night.
3. Agree what "answering" means: a phone call to the person, a look out the window, a drive around the block.
4. Agree when to call 911 — and make it simple: if they can't be found right away, call (Chapter 22).
5. Put the plan on the fridge and share it with anyone who helps, such as a neighbor or a paid caregiver.

TIP

Fewer, better alerts

If phones buzz all day, people start ignoring them. Turn off alerts you don't act on, so the important ones stand out.

GOOD TO KNOW

Tell a trusted neighbor

A neighbor who knows the person and has your number is one of the best safety tools there is. A recent photo and your phone number are enough.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Nobody is left wondering whether someone else saw the alert. The job is shared, and so is the worry.

CHAPTER 18

Charging Routines That Stick

Almost every device in this guide needs charging — some every night. A charging routine is what turns a gadget into real peace of mind. The trick is to tie charging to something that already happens every day.

A routine many families use

1. Pick one charging spot, near where the person gets ready for bed, with every charger plugged in.
2. Charge at the same time every day — at bedtime for a phone or insole; during a morning shower or breakfast for a watch.
3. Put the device back on at the same point every morning: watch on with the glasses, shoes with the SmartSole by the door.
4. Turn on low-battery alerts in the caregiver app if it has them.
5. Check the battery level in the app each evening. It takes ten seconds.

How long batteries usually last

Device	Plan on charging
Smartphone with location sharing	Every night
Apple Watch	Every day
GPS SmartSole	Every night
Dedicated GPS watch or tracker	Check the maker; often every day or two
Medical-alert pendant	Check the maker; varies widely
AirTag and similar tags	Replaceable coin battery, about once a year

TIP

A spare charger

Keep a second charger in the car or at a family member's house, so a visit doesn't mean a dead battery.

GOOD TO KNOW

Involve the person

A gentle, repeated habit tends to go down easier than a surprise. "Let's plug in your watch while we have breakfast" is kinder — and works better — than taking it away without a word.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The device is charged and on the person when it matters, without a nightly scramble.

CHAPTER 19

When the Map Stops Updating

Sooner or later, the dot on the map goes gray, an alert doesn't arrive or the location looks hours old. Here's what to check, in order. If you're worried about the person right now, don't troubleshoot — call them, go look, or call 911.

Phone location sharing (Find My, Find Hub, Life360)

1. Is the phone charged and turned on?
2. Is it with the person, or did it get left at home?
3. Is Location turned on, and does the app still have permission to use location **Always** or **Allow all the time**?
4. On an iPhone, is **Share My Location** still on in Find My's **Me** tab, and is **Hide Location** off?
5. Is a strong battery saver turned on? It can slow updates.
6. Are the apps up to date? Restart the phone.

Wearable GPS devices

1. Check the battery in the caregiver app. Charge the device if it's low.
2. Make sure the plan is paid up — an expired card can quietly stop service.
3. Indoors, GPS can be weak. Step outside or near a window for a few minutes.
4. Restart the device as the maker's guide shows.
5. Still stuck? Call the maker's support line from their official website.

HEADS UP

If someone turned it off

Sometimes the person turns sharing off, takes off the watch or leaves the phone behind on purpose. That's a message worth listening to. Talk it over calmly, and see whether a different, more comfortable option would suit them better (Chapter 3).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A quick, calm checklist instead of a panic when the map goes quiet.

PART 6

Community Help & Emergencies

You don't have to do this alone. Local law-enforcement programs, MedicAlert, and the Alzheimer's Association are there to help — and if someone is missing, the answer is always to call 911.

CHAPTER 20

Project Lifesaver & Local Law-Enforcement Programs

Project Lifesaver is a program run by local sheriff's offices and police departments in many parts of the country. It's built for people at risk of getting lost, including people living with dementia.

How it usually works

- The family calls the sheriff's office or police department to enroll.
- A deputy fits the person with a personalized wristband that sends out its own radio signal.
- If the person goes missing, the family calls 911. A trained team comes to the area and searches with a receiver that picks up that signal.
- Rules differ by county. Some ask for a letter from the person's doctor, some programs are free and some charge a monthly fee, and most require you to live in that county.

Finding out what's offered near you

1. Call your county sheriff's office on its non-emergency number. Here, that's the Portage County Sheriff's Office in Ravenna.
2. Ask: "Do you offer Project Lifesaver, or another program for people with dementia who may get lost?"
3. Ask about cost, who changes the wristband battery, and how to enroll.
4. Also ask whether they keep a voluntary registry with a photo and description. Some departments do.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not every county has it

Project Lifesaver is offered only where a local agency has signed up. If yours doesn't, ask what they recommend instead — and keep a recent photo ready (Chapter 22).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Trained local responders who already know your loved one's name and picture before anything happens.

CHAPTER 21

MedicAlert ID & Safe & Found

A **MedicAlert** ID is a bracelet or necklace engraved with key information and a 24/7 phone number. If a stranger, police officer or paramedic finds someone who seems lost or confused, the ID tells them who to call. MedicAlert Foundation is a nonprofit.

MedicAlert plans, as of November 2026

Plan	Yearly price	Good to know
Safe	$35	Basic membership
Safe & Connected	$55	More services for family
Safe & Found	$75	Adds 24/7 wandering support for people at risk of getting lost

The ID itself is usually bought separately. **Safe & Found** is MedicAlert's plan for people living with Alzheimer's disease, other dementias, autism or other conditions that can lead to getting lost. You may see it called by its older name, **MedicAlert + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return**.

TIP

Choose an ID they'll wear

Let the person pick the style if they can. A bracelet with a clasp that's hard to undo is often the most reliable. Check the current price and plan details at medicalert.org.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't need to be enrolled to get help

Anyone can call 911 to report a missing person. MedicAlert is an extra layer, not a requirement.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Even if a phone is dead and a tracker is at home, a kind stranger can still find out who to call.

CHAPTER 22

If Someone Goes Missing: Call 911

If a person living with dementia is missing, **call 911 right away**. Don't wait to see if they come back, and don't wait for an app to refresh. Tell the call-taker the person has dementia — it tells them this is urgent.

Right now, in order

1. **Call 911.** Say: "My [father] has dementia and is missing." Give their name, age and what they're wearing.
2. Give the location from Find My, Find Hub, Life360 or the GPS device, and how old that location is.
3. If they're enrolled in Project Lifesaver or MedicAlert, say so. Then call MedicAlert's 24/7 number too.
4. While someone else is on the phone, quickly check the house, yard, car, garage and nearby places they like to go.
5. Keep your phone free and charged. Stay where the police can reach you.

Get ready before you ever need it

- A recent, clear photo of the person on your phone.
- A list of places they might head for: a past home, an old job, church, a favorite store.
- Their height, weight, eye color and any medical conditions written down.
- A piece of worn clothing set aside in a paper bag, if a search team ever asks for one.

STAY SAFE

Call 911 immediately

Many people who leave are not in danger at first, but weather, traffic and water can change that quickly. Responders would always rather come early. You will never be in trouble for calling.

TIP

When they're home safe

Greet them calmly, without scolding. They may be frightened or not realize anything happened. Later, think about what they may have been looking for, and tell their doctor.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A clear plan means you act fast instead of freezing — and that is what matters most.

CHAPTER 23

The Alzheimer's Association & Support for You

Caring for someone living with memory loss is hard work, and you deserve support too. The Alzheimer's Association is a good first call, whatever the question.

Where to turn

Who	What they can help with
24/7 Helpline	**800-272-3900** — free, any time, day or night
Website	alz.org, and alz.org/safety for safety and getting-lost tips
Your local chapter	Ask the Helpline for the chapter nearest you, plus support groups and classes
Their doctor	For changes in health, sleep or behavior, and for local referrals
Your Area Agency on Aging	For in-home help and caregiver programs in your county

GOOD TO KNOW

Talking with the doctor

Getting lost more often, being restless at night or sudden changes are all worth mentioning to the person's doctor. I can explain the gadgets; the doctor knows the person's health. Bring your notes.

TIP

Take care of yourself

A support group — in person, on the phone or online — can be a real help. Other caregivers often have the best practical tips of all.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Expert, caring help is a phone call away, at any hour.

PART 7

Staying Safe, Getting Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

The scams that target worried families, how to keep location information private, an honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary for the fridge.

CHAPTER 24

Scams, Privacy & Respect

Worried families are a favorite target for scammers, and location information is private. A few simple habits keep both you and the person you care for safe.

SCAM ALERT

"Free" medical alert or tracker offers

A call or letter says a "free" tracker or medical alert has been ordered for your loved one and just needs a card number for shipping. Hang up or throw it out. Buy only from a company you looked up yourself.

SCAM ALERT

Fake renewal emails

An email says your Life360, AngelSense or MedicAlert plan "failed to renew" and asks you to click a link. Don't click. Open the app or type the company's address into your browser and check there.

SCAM ALERT

Fake support numbers

Searching for a tracker's support line can turn up ads for fake "help desks" that ask for remote access or payment. Use the number in the official app or on the company's own website.

Keeping location private

- Share the person's location with only one or two trusted people.
- Use a strong password on every caregiver app, and turn on two-step verification where it's offered.
- Never post the person's location, routine or photo with their address on social media.
- When a device is no longer used, cancel the plan and remove it from the account.

Respect, every step of the way

Behind every alert is a grown adult with a lifetime of experience. Keep talking with them about the tools, use their name, and choose the least intrusive option that keeps them safe. Look at the map when there's a reason to, not all day long.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Peace of mind for you, and dignity and privacy for the person you love.

CHAPTER 25

When to Call Bill

Much of what's in this guide you can do yourself, at your own pace. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time and worry. Here's my straight advice.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Setting up location sharing and alerts** on the person's phone and yours, with everyone at the table.
- **An Apple Watch for a parent** who doesn't have an iPhone, set up from your iPhone.
- **Door and motion sensors** — choosing them, sticking them up, naming them and testing the alerts.
- **Deciding between devices** — watch, insole, pendant or phone — with no sales pitch.
- **The map stopped updating** and you've tried the checklist in Chapter 19.
- **Family members far away** who want to get the same alerts.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace, explain what I'm doing in plain words, and never talk down to anyone — including the person whose devices we're setting up. I'll tell you honestly when something isn't worth your money, and I don't sell trackers or subscriptions. I've been doing this kind of work for more than 30 years, and I serve Portage County, Ohio, in person, and folks farther away by remote help.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is yours to keep for free; if you'd like a hand, I'm only a phone call away.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may meet Sophie first

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. A real person — me — does the actual help.

STAY SAFE

In an emergency, call 911 first

If someone is missing right now, don't call me — call 911. I'm here for the setup, not the emergency.

Thank you for looking after someone you love. Take it one step at a time.

— Bill

CHAPTER 26

Your GPS Trackers & Alerts Cheat-Sheet

Keep this on the fridge. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

Topic	Remember
Someone is missing	**Call 911 right away.** Say they have dementia.
iPhone	Find My > People > Add > Share My Location > Share Indefinitely.
Android	Find Hub > People > + > until you stop > Create share.
Life360	Free plan: live map and 2 Places. Paid plans from $9.99 a month.
Leave-home alerts	Find My Notify Me, Find Hub location notifications, Life360 Places.
Apple Watch	Apple Watch For Your Kids (formerly Family Setup); cellular watch needed.
AirTags & tags	For keys and bags — not for tracking a person.
At home	Door chimes, bed and motion alerts.
Charging	Same place, same time, every day.
Help lines	Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline 800-272-3900 · alz.org

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Devices the person uses	_____
Who gets alerts (day / night)	_____
Caregiver app logins (kept safe)	_____
GPS device support number	_____
MedicAlert ID number	_____
Project Lifesaver or sheriff contact	_____
Places they may head for	_____
Doctor's phone	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Can't find them? Call 911 now.
2. Map gray? Check the battery and that the device is with them.
3. Check location is on and sharing hasn't been paused.
4. Restart the phone or device.
5. Check the plan is paid up.
6. Still stuck? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

STAY SAFE

Remember

Leaving home unexpectedly is common with memory loss and nobody's fault. Stay calm, call 911, and greet them kindly when they're home.