BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Life360 & Family Location Sharing

Life360, Apple Find My and Google location sharing — set up kindly, kept private, explained one step at a time

A plain-English guide for families, kids and grandparents

Peace of mind, with everyone's say-so

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

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What's Inside

This is your family location-sharing manual. It covers the three tools most families use — the Life360 app, Apple's Find My, and Google's location sharing — plus the phone settings that make them work, the privacy controls that keep them fair, and the safety warnings worth knowing. Read it in any order and at your own pace; there is no test. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. Apps change their screens now and then, so if a button looks a little different on yours, look for the same words.

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PART 1

Getting Started

What family location sharing is (and isn't), which tool fits your family, and the kind conversation that should always come first. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you're reading this, chances are someone in your family has asked a simple question with a not-so-simple answer: *"Can we see where each other are?"* Maybe it's a parent with a child who just got a first phone. Maybe it's a grown son or daughter who'd sleep better knowing Mom made it home from the grocery store. Maybe it's you, and you'd simply like your family to know you're safe without having to call.

I'm Bill. Helping folks feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I wrote this guide the same way I'd explain it sitting next to you at your kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, with no rushing and no fancy words. If I use a term you don't know, I'll stop and explain it.

What this guide covers

- **Life360** — the popular family app that works on both iPhone and Android phones.
- **Apple Find My** — the location sharing built into every iPhone, plus **Check In** in Messages.
- **Google location sharing** — built into Android phones and Google Maps, plus **Family Link** for kids and **Find Hub** for lost phones (Find Hub is the new name for what used to be called Find My Device).
- The **phone settings** that make sharing work, what it does to your **battery**, and how to **pause or stop** sharing at any time.
- **Privacy and safety**: who can see what, how to spot unwanted tracking, and the scams that hang around these apps.

The big promise: this is about care, not control

Location sharing works best when everyone in the family knows about it, agrees to it, and knows how to turn it off. Used that way, it's a quiet comfort: fewer worried phone calls, fewer "where are you?" texts, and help that can find you faster on a bad day. Used secretly, it damages trust. Everything in this guide assumes the first way, and Chapter 4 walks you through the conversation that makes it work.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

When the whole family is on board, location sharing stops feeling like being watched and starts feeling like being looked after. Grandkids get a little more freedom, parents worry a little less, and an older parent can stay independent while family still knows they're all right.

You can't break anything by exploring

Tapping around in these apps to see what's there won't hurt your phone, and every sharing setting can be turned back off. If you ever feel lost, close the app and open it again. You'll be right back on the main map.

And I'm only a phone call away

If you ever get stuck, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question, and setting this up for a whole family is exactly the kind of thing I'm glad to help with.

So let's take it one step at a time. You're going to do just fine.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What Location Sharing Is (and Isn't)

Before we set anything up, it helps to know what's actually happening when two phones "share location." It's simpler than it sounds.

How your phone knows where it is

Your phone figures out its own position using a mix of three things: **GPS** (signals from satellites), nearby **Wi-Fi** networks, and the **cell towers** it's talking to. Outdoors with a clear sky, GPS is usually accurate to within a few dozen feet. Indoors, underground, or in a big building, the phone leans more on Wi-Fi and cell towers, and the dot can be less exact.

GOOD TO KNOW

That's why Wi-Fi matters, even when you're not using it

Life360's own help pages recommend keeping Wi-Fi turned on, even when you're not connected to a network, because nearby networks help the phone pin down where it is. Leaving Wi-Fi on costs you nothing and makes the dot on the map more accurate.

What "sharing" means

When you share your location, your phone sends its position to the app's service every so often, and the people you've chosen can see it on a map. Depending on the app, they may also see your **battery level**, how long you've been at a place, and whether you're driving or walking. Google, for example, says the people you share with can see your name, profile picture, real-time location and battery status.

What location sharing can't do

- **It can't see a phone that's off, dead or out of signal.** The map shows the last place the phone reported, sometimes with a note saying how long ago that was.
- **It isn't a medical alert.** It won't notice a fall at home unless you're using a feature or device designed for that. (Our companion guide, *Medical Alert & Fall Detection*, covers those.)
- **It can't read messages, listen to calls or see the screen.** Location apps show location and a few related details, nothing more.
- **It isn't perfect.** A dot can jump across the street or lag a few minutes behind. Treat it as a helpful hint, not a guarantee.

TIP

Look at the time stamp, not just the dot

When a family member's dot hasn't moved in a while, check whether the app says "Now" or shows an older time. An old time usually just means their phone is off, asleep, or out of signal. It's rarely a reason to panic, and a quick phone call clears it up.

Three ways families share

Tool	In a nutshell
Life360	A separate app for iPhone and Android. Families join a private group called a **Circle**. Free to use, with optional paid plans for extras like longer history and roadside help.
Apple Find My	Built into every iPhone, iPad and Mac. Free. Works best when everyone has Apple devices.
Google Location Sharing	Built into Android phones and the Google Maps app (which also runs on iPhone). Free. Parents of younger kids often use **Family Link** instead.

Chapter 3 helps you choose between them.

CHAPTER 3

Which Tool Is Right for Your Family?

There's no single "best" app. The right choice depends mostly on what phones your family carries and what you want the sharing to do. Here's the honest comparison.

Start with the phones

- **Everyone has an iPhone?** Apple's built-in **Find My** is free, already on every phone, and doesn't need another account. Most all-iPhone families never need anything else.
- **A mix of iPhone and Android? Life360** works the same on both, which is its biggest advantage. Google Maps location sharing also works on both phones, as long as everyone has a Google account.
- **Everyone has Android?** Google's built-in sharing is free and already there. For children under 13 with Android phones, **Family Link** adds parental controls along with location.

Then think about what you want it to do

What you want	Find My (iPhone)	Google sharing	Life360
See each other on a map	Yes, free	Yes, free	Yes, free
Alert when someone arrives or leaves a place	Yes, free	Yes (notifications you set)	Free: 2 Places; more on paid plans
"Let them know I got there" automatically	Check In in Messages	Not covered here	Place alerts, No Show alerts
Works on iPhone AND Android	No	Yes, through Google Maps	Yes
Crash alerts sent to the family group	Not part of Find My	Not part of location sharing	Yes, free alert; dispatch on paid plans
Roadside help, longer history	No	No	Paid plans

GOOD TO KNOW

You can use more than one

Some families use Find My among the iPhone users and Life360 so an Android-carrying grandchild can be included. That's fine. Just try not to stack three apps on one phone. Each one uses a little battery, and fewer apps means fewer settings to keep straight.

A few questions to ask before you choose

1. Who will be sharing? List every person and what phone they carry.
2. Is everyone old enough and willing to agree? (Chapter 4 covers this.)
3. What worry are you trying to ease? "Did she get home?" is different from "Is the new driver safe?"
4. Do you want to pay anything? The free versions of all three tools do the basics well.
5. Who will be the family's "go-to" person for settings? Pick one patient person to keep things tidy.

FROM BILL

My honest starting advice

Start with what's already on your phones and only add Life360 if you need it to cover mixed phones or you want its alerts. Begin free. If after a month you find yourself wishing for a paid feature, you'll know exactly why you're paying for it.

CHAPTER 4

Consent First: The Family Conversation

This is the most important chapter in the guide, and it has no buttons in it. Location sharing goes well when it's agreed to and goes badly when it's sprung on someone. A ten-minute conversation up front saves a lot of hurt feelings later.

Why the conversation matters

Every one of these apps lets the person being shared turn it off. Apple, Google and Life360 all show a clear on-off control, and Life360 even shows the rest of the Circle a "Location Sharing Paused" label when someone turns it off. So sharing only really works with cooperation. And among adults, tracking someone without their knowledge isn't just unkind. Depending on the situation, it can be against the law.

Talking with a child or teen

- **Explain the why.** "This is so I can get to you fast if something goes wrong," not "so I can watch you."
- **Make it two-way when you can.** Many families have parents share too. It feels fairer, and kids like knowing when Mom is almost home.
- **Agree on the rules.** When will you check? Will you ask before calling about where they are? What happens as they get older?
- **Plan to loosen it.** A ten-year-old and a seventeen-year-old need different arrangements. Chapter 26 has ideas for giving teens more room over time.

Talking with an aging parent

An older parent is an adult with every right to their privacy, so the tone here is a request, not a rule. Many parents are glad to share once they see it as a way to stay independent: family worries less, so there are fewer anxious calls and fewer suggestions that they "shouldn't be driving alone."

- Ask, don't tell: "Would you be willing to share your location with me? It would ease my mind."
- Offer to share yours too, so it's a family thing, not a supervision thing.
- Show them how to pause or stop it. Knowing they're in control makes most people more comfortable.

- Respect a "no." You can offer a lighter option, like Apple's Check In for specific trips (Chapter 14).

STAY SAFE

Never share someone's location in secret

Don't install a location app on another adult's phone without their knowledge, and don't turn on sharing from their phone while they're not looking. Apple says plainly that using its trackers to follow people without their consent is a crime in many places. If a family member's judgment is failing because of illness, talk with their doctor and whoever holds their power of attorney about what's appropriate.

Write down your family's agreement

It sounds formal, but a few lines on paper help everyone remember what you agreed to:

Our agreement	
Who shares with whom	_____
Which app we use	_____
When we'll check the map	_____
It's fine to pause sharing when	_____
We'll talk about this again on	_____

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A clear, kind agreement turns location sharing from a source of friction into a family safety net. Everyone knows the rules, nobody feels spied on, and the app does its quiet job in the background.

PART 2

Life360, Step by Step

Getting the app, building your family Circle, reading the map, and setting up the alerts and safety features that make Life360 worth having — plus an honest look at the free and paid plans.

CHAPTER 5

Getting Life360 & Creating Your Circle

Life360 is a free app made by a company called Life360, Inc. (the same company that now owns Tile, the little Bluetooth trackers for keys and wallets). It works on iPhone and Android, and it organizes your family into a private group called a **Circle**.

What a Circle is

A Circle is simply a list of people who can see each other on the Life360 map. You might have one Circle called "Family" and another called "Grandkids." Each person decides whether to share their own location in each Circle they belong to. Life360 allows up to 99 people in a Circle, but recommends keeping it to about 10 for the app to run smoothly.

Step one: install the app

1. On an iPhone, open the **App Store**. On an Android phone, open the **Google Play Store**.
2. Search for **Life360**. Make sure the app is made by **Life360** — the developer name appears right under the app's name.
3. Tap **Get** (iPhone) or **Install** (Android). It's free to download.
4. Open the app and follow the prompts to create your account. You'll be asked for a phone number or email address and your name. Use a real photo or initial for your picture so family can tell who's who.

SCAM ALERT

Get Life360 only from the official app store

Never install Life360, or any app that claims to "track a phone by number," from a link in a text, email or pop-up ad. Search for it yourself in the App Store or Google Play and check the developer name. Fake look-alike apps exist to steal accounts and payment details.

Step two: allow location when asked

When Life360 first opens, your phone will ask several permission questions — location, motion, notifications and Bluetooth. For the app to work properly, the answers matter. Location should be set to **Always** (iPhone) or **Allow all the time** (Android). If you tap the wrong answer by mistake, don't worry: Chapters 18 and 19 show exactly where to fix each one.

Step three: create your Circle

When you join Life360 you'll be guided to start or join a Circle. To make a new one any time:

1. Tap the **Circle Switcher** at the top of the screen (it shows your current Circle's name).
2. Tap **Create a Circle**.
3. Choose or type a name for your Circle, like "Family," and tap the **plus sign** to the left of it.
4. Tap **Send Code** to invite the first members (Chapter 6 covers inviting in detail).

> **TIP**
>
> **Name Circles so everyone understands them**
>
> "Smith Family" or "Mom & the Kids" is clearer than "Circle 1." If you belong to more than one Circle, the name at the top tells you whose map you're looking at.

Who's in charge? The Circle Admin

The person who creates a Circle becomes its **Admin**. Admins can manage the Circle and give admin rights to others. To share admin duties with another adult:

1. Tap **Settings** in the upper left corner of the app.
2. Tap **Circle Management**.
3. Tap **Change Admin Status**.
4. Tap the toggle next to a person to give or take away Admin privileges.

> **FROM BILL**
>
> **Make two adults Admins**
>
> I always suggest two adult Admins in a family Circle, say a parent and an adult child. If one person changes phones or steps away, the other can still keep the Circle running.

CHAPTER 6

Inviting Family & Joining a Circle

Life360 uses a short **invite code** to let someone into your Circle. You send the code; they type it into their own Life360 app. Each person needs the app and their own account on their own phone.

Inviting someone

1. Open the Life360 app and make sure the right Circle name shows at the top.
2. Open your member list and tap **Add a person**.
3. Tap **Send Code**, then choose how to send it: a text message is easiest.
4. Call or tell the person to expect it, so they know the text is real and from you.

> HEADS UP
> **Codes expire after 72 hours**
> An invite code only works for three days. If your family member doesn't get to it in time, simply send a new one. Each code is tied to one Circle; there's no single code that joins all your Circles.

Joining a Circle someone invited you to

If you're new to Life360: install the app (Chapter 5), and enter the code when the app asks during sign-up.

If you already use Life360:

1. Tap the **Circle Switcher** at the top of the screen.
2. Tap **Join a Circle**.
3. Enter the invite code and tap **Submit**.

Short-term sharing: Temporary Circles

Going on a family trip, a reunion weekend, or meeting cousins at a theme park? A **Temporary Circle** lets everyone see each other for a set time, and sharing stops on its own when the time is up. Nobody has to remember to turn it off.

1. Open the Life360 app.
2. Tap the **+** icon on the right side of the main map.

3. Type a name for the Circle, like "Beach Week."
4. Choose how long to share: **1 day**, **3 days**, **5 days**, **1 week** or **2 weeks**.
5. Tap **Create a temporary Circle**.
6. Share the invite link with the people you want to include.

When it ends, you'll get a notification with the choice to keep sharing or start a new Circle. If you don't see the **+** option, update the Life360 app from your app store and look again.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Temporary Circles are perfect for the in-between people in your life — a visiting relative, a friend you're road-tripping with — who you'd like to find this weekend but don't need to see forever.

Leaving a Circle

1. Tap **Settings** in the upper left corner of the app.
2. Tap **Circle Management**.
3. Tap **Leave Circle**, then tap **Yes**.

Every Circle needs at least one Admin. If you're the Admin, hand the role to someone else first (Chapter 5), or the app will choose a new Admin for you.

CHAPTER 7

Reading the Life360 Map

The main Life360 screen is a map with a small round picture for each person in the Circle. Here's how to make sense of it.

The main pieces of the screen

What you see	What it's for
Circle Switcher (top)	Shows which Circle you're viewing. Tap it to switch Circles, create one, or join one.
The map	Each family member appears as their profile picture. Pinch with two fingers to zoom in or out.
People list (bottom)	Tap the **People** icon under the map to see everyone in a list, with where they are and, often, their phone's battery level.
Places icon	Opens your saved places, like Home, School or Grandma's (Chapter 8).
SOS button	Sends a silent help alert to your Circle (Chapter 10).
Settings (upper left)	Your account, location sharing switch, Circle management and privacy controls.

Checking on one person

1. Tap the **People** icon under the map, or tap the person's picture on the map.
2. Their card shows where they are now or were last seen, and for how long.
3. Look for the time. "Now" or "Since 2:15 pm" means the information is fresh. An older time may mean their phone is off, out of battery or out of signal.
4. To get there, look for a directions option on their card, or simply call them.

Location history

Life360 keeps a short history of where Circle members have been, so you can see, for example, that a teen went from school to practice to a friend's house. How far back it goes depends on your plan: **2 days** on the free plan, **7 days** on Silver, and **30 days** on Gold and Platinum.

GOOD TO KNOW

History is something to talk about, too

Many people don't realize their recent travels are visible to the Circle. Mention it during your family conversation (Chapter 4). It's part of being upfront about what sharing means.

Checking in from the app

Life360 has a **Check In** button that lets you post a quick "I'm here" with a nearby place or one you name. Life360 notes that tapping Check In shares that place with your Circle even when your ongoing location sharing is turned off, which is handy for a person who prefers to share only now and then.

TIP

The battery number is a gift

If a family member's battery shows 5%, that explains why they may go quiet soon. A gentle "your phone's almost dead" text has saved many a worried evening.

CHAPTER 8

Places & Place Alerts

Places are spots you mark on the map — Home, School, Work, the senior center — so Life360 can tell you when someone arrives or leaves. This is the feature most families end up loving most.

How many Places you get

The free plan includes **2 Places with alerts**. Silver includes **5 Places**, and Gold and Platinum have **unlimited Places**. Choose your two free Places wisely: for most families, Home and School (or Home and a parent's house) cover the biggest worries.

Add a Place

1. Tap the **Places** icon below the map.
2. Select a preset Place (like Home) or tap **Add a new Place**.
3. Enter the Place name.
4. Choose one of the nearby locations offered, or tap **Locate on Map** to drag the pin to the exact spot.
5. Choose a Place name and tap **Got it**.
6. Tap the **bell icon** to the right of the Place to turn its notifications on or off.

Choose who you hear about

You don't have to get an alert every time every person comes and goes. You can choose, person by person:

1. Tap the **Places** icon below the map.
2. Select the Place.
3. Next to each Circle member, turn the **Arrives** and **Leaves** toggles on or off.
4. Tap **Save** in the upper right corner if you changed the Place's location or size.

Getting the size right

A Place is a circle on the map. Life360 lets you set it anywhere from **250 feet up to 2 miles** across. Bigger isn't always better: a 2-mile Place around Home would say someone "arrived home" when they were really at the corner store.

HEADS UP

Don't let Places touch or overlap

Life360 warns that Places that touch, overlap or sit very close together cause inaccurate alerts. If Grandma lives two doors down, make both Places small so they don't bump into each other.

Editing or deleting a Place

Only the person who created a Place can edit it. Tap the **Places** icon, select the Place, adjust its location or size and tap **Save**. To remove it, scroll down and tap **Delete Place**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Instead of calling to ask "did you make it?", your phone quietly tells you. A parent learns the school bus arrived; an adult child learns Dad got home from his evening drive. No call, no fuss, and no one has to remember to text.

CHAPTER 9

No Show Alerts: "Tell Me If They Don't Arrive"

Place alerts tell you when someone *does* arrive. A **No Show Alert** does the opposite: it tells you when someone *doesn't* get to a saved Place by the time you expect, or when their arrival can't be confirmed because their location sharing is off. Life360 introduced it in 2025.

Set a No Show Alert

1. Tap the **People** icon under the map and select the person you want the alert for.
2. Tap **Set a No Show Alert**.
3. For a one-time alert, choose the **Place** and the **Time** they're expected to arrive.
4. For a repeating alert, turn on the **Repeat** toggle and choose the days.
5. Tap **Set Alert**.

Change or remove it

1. Tap the person's picture.
2. Tap their active No Show Alert.
3. Change the Place, time or repeat days and tap **Update** — or tap **Delete Alert** to remove it.

Good ways families use it

- A weekday alert if a child isn't at school by 8:15.
- An alert if a teen isn't home by curfew.
- An alert if an older parent who drives to a weekly appointment hasn't arrived by the usual time.

TIP

Give a little cushion

Set the time a few minutes after the usual arrival, not right on it. Traffic and long goodbyes happen. An alert that goes off every day for no reason soon gets ignored.

GOOD TO KNOW

A No Show Alert needs a saved Place

The destination must be one of your Places (Chapter 8). On the free plan you have two, so think about which ones matter most before adding a No Show Alert.

CHAPTER 10

SOS, Crash Detection & Emergency Help

Life360 includes two safety features that work even on the free plan: an **SOS** help alert you send on purpose, and **Crash Detection**, which can notice a car crash on its own. What happens next depends on your plan, so this chapter sticks closely to what Life360 itself says.

SOS: a silent call for help to your family

The SOS feature sends a **silent help alert** with your location to everyone in your Circle and to the emergency contacts you've added. On the free plan, Circle members get an app notification and emergency contacts get a text. On paid plans in the U.S., Circle members get texts as well. Life360 sends the SOS as a **Critical Alert**, so it makes a sound on their phones even if they're set to silent or vibrate.

Set up SOS first (do this now, while all is well)

1. Tap the **SOS** button at the bottom of the map.
2. Tap **Begin Setup** and follow the prompts, including adding your emergency contacts.
3. Tap **Practice SOS** to try it without alarming anyone.

Sending an SOS

1. Tap the **SOS** button at the bottom of the map.
2. Tap the **Tap to Send SOS** button. (Or, if you feel uneasy but aren't sure yet, press and hold it; when you let go, a 10-second countdown starts.)
3. When the countdown finishes, your Circle and emergency contacts are alerted and can see your location.
4. Sent it by mistake? **Swipe left on the slider** at the bottom of the screen before the countdown ends, and no alert goes out.

STAY SAFE

In a real emergency, call 911 first

Life360's SOS is a way to reach your family quickly. If you're hurt, in danger or see a fire, call **911** directly. Your phone can always call 911, even without a plan or a passcode.

SOS from a Tile tracker

If you have a **2024 model Tile** linked to Life360, you can set its button to send a discreet SOS: a triple-press starts a 15-second countdown, then alerts your Circle and emergency contacts. Older Tile models can't do this. To set it up, tap the **keys icon** at the bottom of the map, choose the Tile, tap its current press action and select **Send Discreet SOS Alert**.

Crash Detection

When Life360 detects that you've been in a car crash, it contacts you and any emergency contacts you've added, and if you don't respond, your Circle is notified too. Life360 offers this alert to free members. **Emergency dispatch** — Life360's team sending ambulance help — is a paid-plan feature; its plans page lists dispatch for crashes with **Gold** and **Platinum**.

Turn on Crash Alerts

1. Tap the **Safety** tab at the bottom of the app.
2. Under **Driving Safety**, turn on the toggle next to **Crash Alerts**.
3. Make sure Life360 has **Motion & Fitness** (iPhone) or **Physical Activity** (Android) permission, and location set to Always (Chapters 18 and 19).

GOOD TO KNOW

What crash detection needs to work

Life360 says it can sense collisions over about 25 mph, and works best with the phone on your person rather than in a bag or tossed on the back seat. It's a helpful extra, not a replacement for buckling up or for your car's own emergency features.

Who gets help dispatched, and when

Life360's help pages and its plan comparison describe dispatch a little differently: the SOS help article says Silver, Gold and Platinum members in the U.S. can have emergency services dispatched, while the plan comparison lists "Emergency Services Dispatch" only for Gold and Platinum. If dispatch matters to you, check what your plan includes inside the app before you rely on it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Setting up SOS and Crash Alerts takes about five minutes. On an ordinary day you'll never notice them. On a bad day, your family learns something is wrong and where to find you, without you having to make a single call.

CHAPTER 11

Free vs. Paid Plans: An Honest Look

Life360's free plan does the basics well. Its paid memberships add longer history, more Places, and a bundle of extras like roadside assistance. One paid membership covers **everyone in your Circle**, not each person separately.

What each plan costs (U.S., as of November 2026)

Plan	Monthly price	Highlights from Life360's plans page
Free	$0.00	Location sharing, 2 Place alerts, 2 days of history, Crash Detection alerts, Family Driving Summary, Tile tracking
Silver	$9.99	Everything free, plus 7 days of history, 5 Places with unlimited alerts, text alerts to the Circle for SOS
Gold	$16.99	Everything in Silver, plus 30 days of history, unlimited Places, crash detection with emergency dispatch, 24/7 roadside assistance, individual driver reports
Platinum	$24.99	Everything in Gold, plus more towing miles, larger theft and identity coverage, credit monitoring, disaster response, medical and travel assistance

Life360 also offers annual billing, which it says saves about 17%, and a 7-day free trial on the paid plans. Prices can change and vary by country, so check the current price on the sign-up screen.

Who actually needs a paid plan?

- **Families with a new teen driver** often find Gold's driving reports and crash dispatch worth it.
- **Families who want more than two Places** (home, school, work, a parent's house) need at least Silver.
- **Families who just want to see each other on a map** can stay free indefinitely.

HEADS UP

Free trials turn into charges

A 7-day trial becomes a paid subscription unless you cancel before it ends. If you start one, put a reminder on your calendar for day 6. And note: deleting the app, deleting your account or leaving a Circle does **not** cancel a paid Life360 membership. Cancel the subscription itself.

How to cancel a subscription

Where you cancel depends on where you signed up. If you subscribed inside the app on an iPhone, the subscription is managed by Apple through your Apple Account's subscriptions list. If you subscribed on an Android phone, it's managed in the Google Play Store's subscriptions list. If you paid on Life360's website, cancel through your account there. When in doubt, look at the receipt email: it says who billed you.

FROM BILL

My honest take

Don't pay for peace of mind you're already getting for free. Use the free plan for a month. If you keep bumping into a limit, like wanting a third Place, then upgrade for that reason. And if you'd like a second opinion on whether a plan is worth it for your family, I'm happy to give you one.

PART 3

Apple Find My & Check In

Everything an iPhone family needs is already built in: sharing with family and friends, arrival and departure notifications, and Check In for those "text me when you get there" moments.

CHAPTER 12

Sharing Your Location with Find My

Find My is the green-and-blue app with a radar circle that comes on every iPhone. Besides finding a lost phone, it lets you share your location with family and friends. It's free, it doesn't need a separate account (your Apple Account is enough), and it works on iPhone, iPad, Mac and Apple Watch.

Three ways to share on an iPhone

Type	What it does
Share once	Send a single pin of where you are right now, in Messages or Maps. They can't follow you after that.
Share on the way	Share your arrival time while following directions in Maps, or start a Check In in Messages (Chapter 14).
Share ongoing	Share your Live Location in Find My or Messages for an hour, until the end of the day, indefinitely, or a custom time.

Start sharing with a friend or family member

1. Open **Find My** and tap the **Me** tab. Make sure **Share My Location** is turned on.
2. Tap the **People** tab, tap the **Add** button (+), then tap **Share My Location**.
3. Choose the person you want to share with from your contacts.
4. Choose how long: for an hour, until the end of the day, indefinitely, or a custom time.

Live Location, which lets people see you moving and roughly how fast, needs an iPhone with iOS 15 or later on both ends. Some sharing options need iOS 17 or later, so if you don't see one, update your iPhone.

If your family uses Family Sharing

With Apple's **Family Sharing**, the family organizer turns on location sharing for the group, and the organizer's location is shared with everyone automatically. Each family member then chooses whether to share their own location. Family members appear in the People tab automatically, but you only see the ones who have chosen to share with you.

1. Open the **Settings** app.
2. Tap **Family**, then tap **Location Sharing**.
3. Under **Share Your Location With**, choose the family members to share with.

4. Optional: turn on **Automatically Share Location** so new family members who join later can see you too.

GOOD TO KNOW

Choose which of your devices shares

If you carry an iPhone but also have an iPad at home, make sure the iPhone is the one sharing, or family will see you "at home" all day. On the iPhone, open **Settings**, tap your name, tap **Find My**, then tap **Use this iPhone as My Location**.

Seeing where family is

Open Find My and tap **People**. Tap a name to see them on the map and get directions. People you share with can also find you in Maps, in your contact card, and by tapping your name at the top of a Messages conversation.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

An all-iPhone family gets location sharing for free, with nothing extra to install and no new password to remember. And if a phone goes missing, family members you share with can help find it.

Family can help find a missing iPhone

If you share your location with your Family Sharing group and have Find My turned on, family members can see your device's location, play a sound on it, put it in Lost Mode, or erase it remotely if it's lost for good.

CHAPTER 13

Find My Notifications: Arrivals & Departures

Just like Life360's Place alerts, Find My can tell you when someone you share with **arrives** at a place, **leaves** a place, or **isn't at** a place at a certain time. It's built in and free.

Set up a notification about someone

1. Open **Find My**, tap **People**, and tap the person's name.
2. Under **Notifications**, tap **Add**, then tap **Notify Me**.
3. Choose whether to be told when they arrive, leave, or aren't at a location.
4. Choose the location, and choose whether it's a one-time or recurring notification.

GOOD TO KNOW

They'll know, and that's on purpose

When someone sets a location notification about you, Apple lets you know. For a recurring notification (for example, every time you leave work) you have to accept the invitation first. That's Apple's way of keeping it consensual.

Let someone know when YOU arrive

You can also set Find My to tell a family member when you get somewhere. In Find My, tap **People**, tap the person, then under **Notifications** tap **Add** and choose **Notify [name]**. Pick the place and whether it's when you arrive or leave.

See and remove notifications about you

1. Open **Find My** and tap **Me**.
2. Look for a section called **Notifications About You**. If it isn't there, no one is being notified when your location changes.
3. Tap a name, tap the notification, then delete it and confirm.

TIP

Make sure Find My can notify you

If notifications never arrive, check **Settings** > **Notifications** > **Find My** and make sure **Allow Notifications** is on.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A daughter can get a quiet ping when Dad reaches the senior center each Tuesday, without Dad having to remember to call. And Dad can see, anytime he likes, exactly which notifications are set about him.

CHAPTER 14

Check In: "Let Them Know I Got There"

Some people don't want their location shared all the time, and that's perfectly reasonable. **Check In**, in the Messages app, is the gentle alternative. You start it for one trip or one outing, and your iPhone lets a family member know when you've arrived. Your location is only shared if something seems wrong.

What you need

Both you and the person you're checking in with need an iPhone with **iOS 17 or later**. It's free.

Start a Check In for a trip

1. Open **Messages** and open your conversation with the family member (or start a new one).
2. Tap the **+** button, tap **Check In** (you may need to tap **More** to find it), then tap **Edit**.
3. Choose **When I arrive**.
4. Tap **Change**, type your destination, and pick it from the list.
5. Choose how close counts as "arrived": **Small**, **Medium** or **Large**. Then tap **Done**.
6. Tap **Driving**, **Transit** or **Walking**, add time if you need it, and tap **Send**.

When your iPhone reaches the destination, Check In ends by itself and your family member gets a note that you arrived. If you're not making progress, your iPhone asks you about it and gives you **15 minutes** to answer before your contact is alerted.

Start a Check In on a timer

Good for a walk, a doctor's appointment, or a first visit somewhere new.

1. In Messages, open the conversation, tap **+**, tap **Check In**, then tap **Edit**.
2. Choose **After a timer** and pick how long.
3. Tap **Send**.
4. When the timer ends you'll be asked to **End Check In** or add 15, 30 or 60 more minutes.

What your family member sees if something goes wrong

If you don't arrive, don't answer the prompts, or make an Emergency SOS call during a Check In, your contact is sent a link with the information you chose. **Limited** shares your current location, battery and signal. **Full** adds the route you traveled and where your iPhone was last unlocked. You can change your choice later in **Settings** > **Apps** > **Messages** > **Check In Data**.

HEADS UP

A lost phone looks like a no-show

If your iPhone is lost while a Check In is running, your contact is notified as if you weren't responding. If that happens, call them from another phone so they don't worry.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Check In is the perfect answer for a parent who says "I don't want to be tracked." They share nothing day to day, but family still hears "made it home" after the evening drive. And if something does go wrong, help knows where to look.

PART 4

Google & Android Location Sharing

Google's built-in location sharing, Family Link for younger kids, and Find Hub (the new name for Find My Device) for finding a lost Android phone.

CHAPTER 15

Google Location Sharing

Google calls its feature simply **Location Sharing**. You start it from a Google app — most people use **Google Maps** — and it works on Android phones and on iPhones that have Google Maps installed. That makes it a handy free option for a family with a mix of phones, as long as everyone has a Google account.

Where Google location sharing lives

Google lists these apps and services as places you can share your real-time location from: **Maps**, **Messages**, **Find Hub**, **Family Link** and **Personal Safety**. However you start, it's the same sharing underneath, and you manage it in one place on your phone.

What people you share with can see

- Your name and profile picture
- Your real-time location, and sometimes where you've recently been
- Your phone's battery status
- Sometimes how you're traveling, such as walking or driving, and the name of a nearby business or address

For each person, you can also decide whether they're allowed to create notifications about you, such as an alert when you arrive home.

What you need

- A Google account, signed in on your phone
- An internet connection (Wi-Fi or cellular data)
- The phone's **Use location** setting turned on

Starting a share

Open **Google Maps**, tap your **profile picture**, and look for **Location sharing**. From there, Maps walks you through choosing the person and how long to share — for a set time, or until you turn it off. Google changes the Maps layout from time to time, so if the words look slightly different, look for the same idea.

GOOD TO KNOW

The switch is off until you share with someone

On an Android phone, Google's Location Sharing setting is off by default and can't be switched on until you've shared with someone from a Google app. So if you go looking for it in Settings and it's grayed out, that's normal. Start a share in Maps first.

Managing who you share with (Android)

1. Open your phone's **Settings** app.
2. Tap **Location** > **Location services** > **Google Location Sharing**.
3. Tap the list of people you share with to see everyone.
4. Next to a person's name, tap **Stop** to stop sharing with them.

Managing who you share with (iPhone or computer)

1. Go to **myaccount.google.com** in a web browser and sign in.
2. Click **People & sharing**.
3. Scroll to "Info you can share with others" and click **Location Sharing**.
4. Click **Manage Location Sharing**, choose the person, and tap **Stop**.

HEADS UP

Incognito mode doesn't pause sharing

Google is clear on this: using Incognito mode in Google Maps, or changing an individual app's location permission, does **not** stop or pause Location Sharing. Chapter 21 shows the switch that does.

CHAPTER 16

Family Link: Location for Younger Kids on Android

Google Family Link is Google's free parental-controls app. Children under 13 in the U.S. usually have a Google account supervised by a parent through Family Link. Along with screen-time limits and app approvals, it lets a parent see where the child's Android phone (or compatible Fitbit device) is.

Turn on your child's location

1. On the parent's phone, open the **Family Link** app.
2. Tap **Location**, then **Set up location**. (If you don't see that, select your child and turn on **Location sharing**.)
3. If you have more than one child, choose which children to turn it on for.
4. Tap **Next**, then **Turn on**. It can take a little while for the location to appear.

Make the location more accurate

1. In Family Link, tap **Location** and select your child.
2. Tap **More** (top right), then **Location settings**.
3. Select your child's device and turn on **Location Accuracy** (some phones say **High Accuracy**).

Family places and arrival alerts

Family Link can tell you when your child arrives at or leaves a place like home or school.

1. In Family Link, select your child, then tap **Location** > **Family places** > **New place**. (Or tap **Add home** or **Add school**.)
2. Type the address and choose the right one from the list.
3. Give it a name in the **Location label** box and tap **Save**.
4. Back in **Family places**, select the place and turn **Arrives** and **Leaves** on or off.

GOOD TO KNOW

Alerts need accuracy turned on

Google says location notifications switch off if Location Accuracy is off. Two family places also can't share the same address or sit too close together.

When the location doesn't show

- The child's phone is powered off, isn't connected to the internet, or hasn't been used recently.
- If your child signs in on more than one device, Family Link shows only the most actively used one.
- Google says location works best when the child's device has a mobile data plan.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

For a young child's first Android phone, Family Link gives you location and age-appropriate controls in one free app, so you don't need to add Life360 unless you want its extra features.

CHAPTER 17

Find Hub: When an Android Phone Goes Missing

Find Hub is Google's tool for finding lost Android phones, tablets, watches, earbuds and tracker tags. It used to be called **Find My Device**, so if a relative mentions that name, it's the same thing. If a Google account is on the phone, Find Hub is turned on automatically.

Find a lost Android phone

1. On another Android phone or tablet, open the **Find Hub** app. No other Android device? Go to **google.com/android/find** in any web browser.
2. Sign in. Helping a friend? Tap **Sign in as guest** and let them sign in with their own account.
3. Select the missing device from the list. It shows up on a map if it can be found.
4. Choose what to do: **Play sound** rings it at full volume for 5 minutes, even on silent; **Mark as lost** locks it and lets you put a message and phone number on the screen.

HEADS UP

Erasing is a last resort

Find Hub can also factory-reset a phone you'll never get back. That permanently deletes everything on it, and afterward the phone no longer shows up in Find Hub. Try ringing and marking it lost first.

For the phone to be findable

Google lists what the lost phone needs in order to be located, locked or erased:

- It has power
- It's connected to mobile data or Wi-Fi
- It's signed in to a Google account
- Find Hub is turned on
- It's visible on Google Play

Even when a phone is offline, Android phones by default take part in the **Find Hub network**, which uses other Android phones nearby, with encrypted location information, to help find lost devices. Google says you need a screen lock PIN, pattern or password set for the

network to help.

GOOD TO KNOW

Kids' phones show up for parents

If you manage a child's Google account with Family Link, their supervised devices appear automatically in the **Family devices** tab in Find Hub.

TIP

Write down your phone's IMEI number

Your carrier can block a stolen phone using its IMEI number. Find it in Find Hub by selecting the device and tapping **Settings**, and jot it on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 29.

PART 5

Phone Settings That Make It Work

Most "Life360 isn't updating" problems come down to a handful of phone permissions. Here's exactly where they live on an iPhone and on an Android phone, and what to expect from your battery.

CHAPTER 18

iPhone Settings for Life360

An iPhone protects your privacy by asking permission before any app can use your location, motion sensors or Bluetooth. That's a good thing, but Life360 needs several of those permissions to do its job. If someone's dot is stuck or alerts never arrive, check these first, on *their* phone.

GOOD TO KNOW

Where apps live in Settings on iOS 26 and 27

On current iPhones, the settings for apps you've downloaded are grouped together. Open **Settings**, scroll to the bottom, tap **Apps**, and then tap **Life360**. Everything in this chapter starts from that Life360 screen.

1. Location: Always, with Precise on

1. Open **Settings** > **Apps** > **Life360**.
2. Tap **Location**.
3. Tap **Always**.
4. Turn **Precise Location** on.

"While Using the App" isn't enough. With that setting, Life360 only knows where you are while it's open on the screen, so your family sees an old location the rest of the time.

2. Motion & Fitness: on

Motion data powers driving features and Crash Detection. On the Life360 settings screen, turn **Motion & Fitness** on.

3. Notifications: on, including Time Sensitive

1. On the Life360 settings screen, tap **Notifications**.
2. Turn **Allow Notifications** on.
3. Turn **Time Sensitive Notifications** on, so arrival and safety alerts can come through Focus modes.

4. Bluetooth: on

Life360 uses Bluetooth to improve location updates and to connect to Tile trackers. Turn **Bluetooth** on in Settings, and on the Life360 settings screen make sure **Bluetooth** is allowed. (You can also find it under **Settings** > **Privacy & Security** > **Bluetooth**.)

5. Wi-Fi and cellular data

- Keep **Wi-Fi** turned on, even when you're not connected, to improve accuracy.
- Make sure Life360 is allowed to use **cellular data** (on the Life360 settings screen, **Cellular Data** should be on).

TIP

Do a quick "Life360 check-up" after an iPhone update

Big iPhone updates sometimes ask about permissions again. After each one, open Life360 and look for any banner asking you to fix a setting. It takes a minute and keeps the family map accurate.

Setting (Settings > Apps > Life360)	Should be
Location	Always, with Precise Location on
Motion & Fitness	On
Notifications	Allow Notifications on; Time Sensitive on
Bluetooth	On
Cellular Data	On

CHAPTER 19

Android Settings for Life360

Android phones come from many makers — Google Pixel, Samsung Galaxy, Motorola and more — and each puts settings in slightly different places. The settings themselves are the same. Here's what Life360 needs, with paths for Pixel and Samsung phones.

1. Location: Allow all the time, with precise location on

Google Pixel

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Location**.
2. Find and select **Life360**.
3. Tap **Allow all the time**.
4. Turn **Use precise location** on.

Samsung Galaxy

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Location**.
2. Tap **App permissions**, then **Life360**.
3. Tap **Allow all the time**.
4. Turn **Use precise location** on.

2. Physical activity: Allow

This is Android's name for motion sensing, which powers driving features and Crash Detection. On a Pixel: **Settings** > **Apps** > **Life360** > **Permissions** > **Physical activity** > **Allow**. On a Samsung, look under the Life360 app's permissions for **Physical activity** and tap **Allow**.

3. Notifications and Nearby devices

- In **Settings** > **Apps** > **Life360**, turn **Notifications** on.
- Set the **Nearby devices** permission to **Allow**, so Life360 can use Bluetooth.

4. Battery: don't let Android put Life360 to sleep

To save power, Android can pause apps running in the background. That's great for games, but it stops Life360 from updating your location. Life360 recommends setting its battery option to **Not optimized**. On many current phones this setting is in **Settings** > **Apps** > **Life360** > **Battery** (or **App battery usage**), and the choice may be called **Unrestricted**.

5. Data saver off for Life360

Life360 recommends turning off **Data Saver** and any "limit mobile data" mode for the app, and keeping Wi-Fi on even when you're not connected to a network.

Setting	Should be
Location	Allow all the time, with Use precise location on
Physical activity	Allow
Notifications	On
Nearby devices	Allow
Battery	Not optimized (some phones: Unrestricted)
Data Saver	Off for Life360

HEADS UP

Phone "cleaner" apps can break location sharing

Apps that promise to "boost" or "clean" an Android phone often force-close background apps, including Life360. If someone has one installed and their dot keeps freezing, that's a likely culprit. Most phones don't need them at all.

CHAPTER 20

Battery: What to Expect

Any app that checks your location in the background uses some battery. The good news is that it's usually a modest amount, and a few habits keep it that way.

Life360's own estimate

Life360 says to expect about **10% shorter battery life over a 24-hour period** when running the app. It notes the drain varies a lot depending on how often you open the app, how often you manually refresh someone's location, and how much you drive, because Life360 turns on high-precision GPS while you're traveling to record the drive.

Habits that save battery

- **Don't keep refreshing.** Checking the map now and then is fine. Repeatedly tapping to refresh a family member's location wakes up their phone each time.
- **Keep the app up to date.** Life360 says it keeps working to improve battery use, so update it when your app store offers an update.
- **Charge overnight.** A phone that starts each day full rarely runs out because of location sharing.
- **Use one sharing app, not three.** Running Life360, Find My sharing and Google sharing all at once doesn't make anyone safer, just more drained.

GOOD TO KNOW

Battery saver modes can slow updates

When a phone's battery saver or Low Power Mode is on, the phone limits background activity. Your location may update less often until it's charged. That's normal, and it's one more reason to glance at the time stamp next to someone's name.

Watch the battery number for your family

Life360 and Google both show family members your phone's battery level. A low number is a gentle cue: "Grandpa's at 8% — he may go quiet soon." It turns a scary silence into an understandable one.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A little battery is a small price for knowing everyone's all right. With the right settings and an overnight charge, most people never notice the difference.

PART 6

Privacy, Pausing & Staying Safe

How to pause or stop sharing in each app, what Life360 does with your data and how to say no, how to spot unwanted tracking, and the scams that target families using these apps.

CHAPTER 21

Pausing & Stopping Sharing

Everyone deserves an off switch, and every app has one. Knowing where it is makes people more comfortable sharing in the first place. Here's how to pause or stop in each tool.

Life360

1. Tap **Settings** in the upper left corner.
2. Tap **Location Sharing**.
3. Turn the toggle off to stop sharing (or on to start again).

- Your Circle will see **"Location Sharing Paused"** under your name, so it isn't secret.
- It only affects the Circle you're in. If you're in more than one Circle, repeat it in each.
- Your location can still be shared if you tap **Check In**, send an **SOS**, or have a crash detected — those are designed to reach family in an emergency.
- Turning sharing off stops new updates but doesn't erase the history Life360 has already collected.

Apple Find My

To do this	Do this
Pause with everyone	Open **Find My**, tap **Me**, and turn off **Share My Location**. Turn it back on and the same people can see you again.
Hide from one person for today	In Find My, tap **People**, tap the person, tap **More**, then **Hide Location**. Sharing comes back automatically the next day.
Stop sharing with one person	In Find My, tap **People**, tap the person, tap **More**, scroll down and tap **Stop Sharing My Location**. Apple says the person isn't notified, though they may notice you're gone from their map.

HEADS UP

Deleting Find My doesn't stop sharing

Apple warns that if you delete the Find My app, people you've shared with can still see your location. Reinstall Find My from the App Store and stop sharing from inside it.

Google Location Sharing (Android)

To do this	Do this
Pause all sharing	**Settings** > **Location** > **Location services** > **Google Location Sharing**, then turn off **Use Location Sharing**.
Stop with one person	Same screen: tap the list of people, then tap **Stop** next to the person.

FROM BILL

Teach the off switch at the same time as the on switch

Whenever I set up location sharing for a family, I show each person how to pause it before we're done. It's the single best thing for trust. People who know they *can* turn it off rarely feel the need to.

CHAPTER 22

Life360 Privacy Choices & Your Data

Life360 is free to use partly because it has other ways of earning money, including advertising and partnerships. Its help pages say location data may be shared with partners for crash detection, research, analytics, attribution and tailored advertising. You have choices about some of that, and they're worth a few minutes.

Open the Privacy Center

1. Open Life360 and tap **Settings** in the upper left corner.
2. Tap **Privacy Center**.

The Privacy Center has two sections: **Your Privacy Choices**, which covers advertising and partner sharing, and **Trusted Partners**, which shows services connected to your Life360 account.

Turn off data sharing

1. In the Privacy Center, tap **Your Privacy Choices**.
2. Scroll down and turn off the **Include my data** toggle.
3. Also tap **Traffic and retail insights** and turn off **Include my data** there.

Trusted Partners: Arity

Life360 shares data with a partner called **Arity** to power features like drive detection and crash alerts. You can disconnect it under **Trusted Partners** > **Arity** > turn off **Connect to Arity** > **Disconnect Arity**. Be aware that features which depend on that partner may stop working if you do.

GOOD TO KNOW

Opting out of ads doesn't stop location sharing

Life360 says that even if you opt out, it continues to collect your location and movement data and shares it with your Circles and with others as needed to provide the service. Opting out limits the advertising and partner uses, not the family map.

Get a copy of your data, or delete your account

In **Your Privacy Choices**, tap **Your Data Rights**. From there you can **Request my personal information** or **Delete my account** (check the box to confirm, then tap **Delete My Account**). Each person deletes their own account.

HEADS UP

Deleting the account doesn't cancel a paid plan

If you pay for Life360, cancel the subscription separately (Chapter 11). Deleting your account, deleting the app or leaving a Circle won't stop the billing.

Apple and Google, for comparison

Apple says its Find My network uses end-to-end encryption and was built with privacy in mind. Google says its Find Hub network uses end-to-end encrypted location information. If privacy is your top concern, that's one reason an all-iPhone or all-Android family may prefer the built-in tools.

CHAPTER 23

Unwanted Tracking & Stalkerware

Everything in this guide is about sharing *with* consent. Sadly, the same technology can be misused to follow someone who hasn't agreed. This chapter helps you recognize that and know what to do. If you ever feel unsafe, your safety comes first: go somewhere public and call **911**.

Alerts about a tracker traveling with you

Small Bluetooth trackers like Apple AirTags and Tile tags are meant for keys and luggage. To stop them being used on people, Apple and Google worked together so that both iPhones and Android phones can warn you if someone else's tracker seems to be moving with you.

On an iPhone

You may see an alert like **"AirTag Found Moving With You"** or **"[Product Name] Found Moving With You"**. To make sure these alerts can reach you:

1. Keep your iPhone updated (iOS 17.5 or later covers other brands' trackers too).
2. In **Settings** > **Privacy & Security** > **Location Services**, keep Location Services on; under **System Services**, turn on **Significant Locations**.
3. Keep **Bluetooth** on.
4. In **Settings** > **Notifications** > **Tracking Notifications**, turn on **Allow Notifications**.
5. Keep Airplane Mode off — you won't get these alerts in Airplane Mode.

If you get an alert, tap it, tap **Continue**, then **Play Sound** to help find the item. In the Find My app, **Items** > **Unknown Items Detected with You** shows past alerts.

On an Android phone

Android 6 and later can send an **unknown tracker alert**. Tap it to see a map of where the tracker traveled with you, then tap **Play sound** to find it — playing the sound doesn't notify the owner. You can also scan any time: **Settings** > **Safety & emergency** > **Unknown tracker alerts** > **Scan now**.

HEADS UP

Turning off Bluetooth won't stop a tracker

Both Apple and Google say that turning off Bluetooth, turning off location, or using Airplane Mode on *your* phone does not stop the tracker's owner from seeing where the tracker is. To stop it, the tracker itself has to be disabled, following its maker's instructions.

STAY SAFE

Think before you disable a tracker you've found

Google points out that turning a tracker off stops future updates to its owner, but some trackers reset when turned off and lose information law enforcement could use. Google suggests leaving it on if turning it off could be unsafe for you. If you're worried about someone's intentions, take a screenshot of the alert and the map, keep the tracker, and contact the police from a safe place.

Has someone set up sharing on my phone without asking?

"Stalkerware" is a general name for apps or settings used to watch someone without their consent. Signs can include a location app you didn't install, sharing you didn't turn on, or someone always seeming to know where you've been. Here's how to check:

- **iPhone:** Open **Settings** > **Privacy & Security** > **Safety Check**. **Manage Sharing & Access** shows who you share your location and other information with, and lets you stop it person by person. **Emergency Reset** stops sharing with everyone at once. There's a **Quick Exit** button on every screen if you need to close it fast.
- **Find My:** open **Me** and look at **Notifications About You** to see who gets alerts about your movements.
- **Android:** check **Settings** > **Location** > **Location services** > **Google Location Sharing** for people you share with, and look through your apps for anything you don't recognize.
- **Life360:** look at which Circles you belong to, using the Circle Switcher at the top of the map.

STAY SAFE

Plan for your safety before you change things

Apple's safety guide notes that people you stop sharing with may notice. If you're in a situation where that could put you at risk, consider reaching out first to a trusted person or an advocate. In the U.S., Apple and Google both point to the **Safety Net Project** at **techsafety.org**, run by the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

CHAPTER 24

Scams Around Location Apps

Wherever families worry, scammers show up. None of these tricks are about the apps themselves; they're about using fear and urgency to get your money or passwords. Knowing them in advance takes away their power.

SCAM ALERT

"Track any phone with just a number"

Ads and websites promising to locate any phone from its number alone are, at best, a waste of money and, at worst, a way to steal your card details. Real location sharing always needs the other person's phone and permission.

SCAM ALERT

Fake "Life360 support" phone numbers

If you search the web for a help line, scam ads can appear at the top pretending to be Life360, Apple or Google support. Real support never asks for gift cards, never needs remote control of your computer to fix a phone app, and won't call you out of the blue. Use the help links inside the app itself.

SCAM ALERT

"Someone is tracking you — tap here" texts

Real tracker warnings appear as notifications from your phone's own system or the Find My app, not as text messages with links. Don't tap links in a text like that. If you're worried, use the steps in Chapter 23 to check for yourself.

SCAM ALERT

The "your grandchild is in trouble" call

Scammers sometimes call grandparents pretending a grandchild has been arrested or hurt and needs money right now. If your family shares locations, here's a calm, quick check: look at the map, then hang up and call your grandchild or their parents on a number you already know. Never pay with gift cards, wire transfers or cryptocurrency because a caller insists.

Good habits

- Install apps only from the App Store or Google Play, and check the developer name.
- Never share an app's invite code or your login code with someone who contacts *you*.
- Be suspicious of any urgent request for money, even if it seems to come from family.
- When unsure, hang up and call a family member, or call me.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Location sharing can actually protect you from some scams: a quick look at the family map often shows that the "emergency" isn't real, before any money leaves your hands.

PART 7

Real-Life Situations

Sharing with an aging parent, giving a teen more room as they grow, and what to do when the dot on the map just isn't right.

CHAPTER 25

Sharing with an Aging Parent

For many adult children, location sharing is a way to worry less about a parent who lives alone or still drives. For many parents, it's a way to keep their independence without a stream of check-up calls. Done kindly, it serves both.

Choose the lightest tool that eases the worry

The worry	A gentle option	Where to read more
"Did Mom get home from her drive?"	Apple Check In for that trip, or a Place alert for Home	Chapters 14 and 8
"What if Dad doesn't show up at his weekly appointment?"	A Life360 No Show Alert, or a Find My "isn't at" notification	Chapters 9 and 13
"What if there's a car accident?"	Life360 Crash Alerts (free) with emergency contacts set	Chapter 10
"What if she gets lost?"	Ongoing sharing with one or two family members	Chapters 7, 12 and 15
"What if he falls at home?"	A medical alert or fall-detection device, not a location app	Our Medical Alert & Fall Detection guide

Setting it up together

1. Sit down together with both phones in hand. Talk through what you'd like and why (Chapter 4).
2. Pick the tool. If your parent has an iPhone and so do you, Find My is usually simplest.
3. Make the settings on *their* phone with them watching, and explain each permission as you go.
4. Show them how to see *your* location too, and how to pause theirs (Chapter 21).
5. Set up only the alerts you really need. One or two good alerts beat ten noisy ones.
6. Agree on what you'll do if an alert comes in: usually, a phone call first.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Instead of a daily "are you all right?" call that can feel like checking up, a parent can simply go about their day. Family hears they arrived, and calls become what they should be: a chance to chat.

Make the phone easy to keep charged

The best location app does nothing if the phone is dead in a drawer. Small habits help: a charger beside the bed, a spare cable in the car, and a gentle reminder to carry the phone when going out. Remember that family can see a low battery number in Life360 and Google sharing.

HEADS UP

When memory is a concern

If a parent has dementia or memory loss, a phone can be left behind or switched off. Talk with their doctor about safety options designed for wandering, and include whoever holds their health care or financial power of attorney in decisions about tracking.

FROM BILL

Help that respects your parent

I'm glad to sit down with you and your parent, in person or over the phone, explain the options in plain words, and set up only what they're comfortable with. Their say-so is the starting point.

CHAPTER 26

Kids & Teens: Growing Independence

Location sharing for children works best when it changes as they grow. What's reassuring for a nine-year-old can feel smothering at seventeen. Here's a simple way to think about it.

A sensible path by age

Stage	Ideas
Younger children	Parents set it up. On Android, Family Link combines location with parental controls (Chapter 16). On iPhone, Apple Family Sharing handles a child's account and location (Chapter 12). Place alerts for home and school cover the big worries.
Early teens	Keep sharing, but explain it and invite their input. Make it two-way: parents share too. Agree when it's okay to call about location.
Older teens and new drivers	Many families use Life360's driving features or a No Show Alert for curfew. Talk about what you'll look at and what you won't.
Heading to college or moving out	Ask, don't assume. Many young adults happily keep sharing with family; some prefer Check In or a Temporary Circle for trips.

Rules that keep trust

- **Agree on when you'll check.** "Only if you're late" is very different from "whenever I'm curious."
- **Don't use the map to catch them out.** If something worries you, ask them about it first.
- **Respect a pause for a good reason**, like a surprise party. Agree in advance what counts.
- **Review it every year or so.** Birthdays make a natural reminder.

GOOD TO KNOW

Kids can turn sharing off, too

On every platform, a determined teen can usually find a way to pause sharing or leave a phone at a friend's house. Location sharing is a safety tool that works because the family trusts each other, not a lock that works without that trust.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Handled this way, location sharing lets you say "yes" more often — to the bike ride, the mall trip, the first solo drive — because you'll know they arrived.

CHAPTER 27

When the Dot Is Wrong: Troubleshooting

Every family eventually sees a dot that's stuck, missing or in the wrong place. Almost always there's a simple explanation. Work through these in order, on the phone of the person whose dot is wrong.

The quick fixes, in order

1. **Check the time stamp.** An old time means the phone isn't reporting. It may be off, dead, in Airplane Mode, or out of signal.
2. **Call or text them.** The simplest check of all.
3. **Open the app on their phone.** Opening Life360 or Find My often gets the location updating again.
4. **Check the permissions**: Location set to Always or Allow all the time, with precise location on (Chapters 18 and 19).
5. **Check that sharing is on**: Life360 **Settings** > **Location Sharing**; Find My **Me** tab > **Share My Location**.
6. **Turn on Wi-Fi**, even if they're not connected to a network.
7. **Update the app** from the App Store or Google Play.
8. **Restart the phone.** Turn it off and on again. It clears up a surprising number of problems.

Common puzzles

What you see	Likely reason
"Life360 says Location Sharing Paused"	They've turned sharing off in that Circle. Ask them about it kindly.
"Find My shows them at home, but they're out"	They may be sharing from an iPad left at home. Use **Use this iPhone as My Location** on their iPhone (Chapter 12).
"The dot is across the street"	Indoors and in town, location can be off by a building or two. Wi-Fi on helps.
"Arrival alerts are wrong"	Places that touch or overlap confuse alerts. Make them smaller (Chapter 8).
"No alerts ever arrive"	Notifications are off for the app on *your* phone, or a Focus mode is hiding them.
"Family Link shows the wrong device"	If the child is signed in on more than one device, Family Link shows only the most actively used one (Chapter 16).
"Android phone keeps going quiet"	Battery optimization is putting Life360 to sleep. Set it to Not optimized or Unrestricted (Chapter 19).

TIP

Don't jump to the worst conclusion

A missing or old dot is almost always a phone that's off, out of battery or out of signal. Call first, then worry if you need to. And if you truly think someone is in danger, call 911.

PART 8

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary to keep handy.

CHAPTER 28

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can set up and manage family location sharing on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time and frustration, so here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Setting up a whole family at once**, especially a mix of iPhones and Android phones, so every phone has the right permissions the first time.
- **Helping an aging parent get comfortable** with sharing, Check In or emergency contacts, explained patiently and at their pace.
- **A dot that never updates** no matter what you try. Some phones bury battery and permission settings in odd places.
- **Choosing whether a paid plan is worth it** for your family. I'll tell you honestly if the free version is enough.
- **Worry that someone is tracking you** without permission. I can help you check your phone calmly, and point you to the right people if it's more than a tech problem.
- **You'd simply rather have a patient person do it** and show you how. That's always a good enough reason.

What working with me is like

I come to your home here in Portage County, or help remotely over the phone and internet, and I work at your pace — no rushing, no talking down. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, I'll set up only what your family has agreed to, and I'll always tell you honestly when something isn't worth your money. That's been my way through more than 30 years of professional experience.

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 free to read and share. Bill's Home Tech serves Portage County, Ohio.

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 with me. A real person, me, does the actual help.

Thank you for taking the time to do this thoughtfully. A family that shares kindly, with everyone's say-so, is a family that worries a little less. And remember: I'm only a phone call away.

— Bill

CHAPTER 29

Your Location Sharing Cheat-Sheet

Print this page and keep it by the phone charger. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

To do this	Do this
Life360: invite someone	Member list > **Add a person** > **Send Code**. Codes last 72 hours.
Life360: join a Circle	**Circle Switcher** > **Join a Circle** > enter code > **Submit**.
Life360: add a Place	**Places** icon > **Add a new Place**; bell icon turns alerts on.
Life360: pause sharing	**Settings** > **Location Sharing** > toggle off (per Circle).
Life360: send SOS	**SOS** button > **Tap to Send SOS**. Swipe left to cancel.
Find My: share	**Me** tab > Share My Location on; **People** > **+** > **Share My Location**.
Find My: pause	**Me** tab > turn off **Share My Location**.
Check In (iPhone)	Messages > conversation > **+** > **Check In** > **Edit**.
Google: stop sharing	Settings > Location > Location services > **Google Location Sharing**.
Lost Android phone	Find Hub app, or **google.com/android/find**.
Safety review (iPhone)	Settings > Privacy & Security > **Safety Check**.

Permissions that make it work

Phone	Settings
iPhone (Settings > Apps > Life360)	Location: Always + Precise; Motion & Fitness on; Notifications on
Android (Life360 app settings)	Location: Allow all the time + precise; Physical activity: Allow; Battery: Not optimized

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Our family uses	_____
Circle name / Admins	_____
Our saved Places	_____
Emergency contacts in the app	_____
Life360 plan (and renewal date)	_____
Phone IMEI numbers	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Dot looks old or missing: check the time stamp, then call or text them.
2. Still nothing: open the app on their phone and check that sharing is on.
3. Check location permission (Always / Allow all the time) and battery settings.
4. Turn Wi-Fi on, update the app, and restart the phone.
5. Worried someone is in danger: call 911.
6. Still stuck: call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

STAY SAFE

Three promises for a happy, safe family map

Share only with consent. Teach everyone the off switch. Call before you worry.