One of the worst nightmares for families who have a loved one with Alzheimer’s disease or a developmental disability is the fear that he or she will accidently run or wander away - an act that can result in devastating consequences. The St. Charles County Police Department, in cooperation with the Department of Public Health, has launched a program to help alleviate this fear and give these families a little more peace of mind.

The Care Trak telemetry tracking system is designed to locate lost individuals who are wearing specially designed wrist transmitters. The system allows law enforcement to track the individual wearing the wrist transmitter from one mile away on the ground, and five miles from the air. These transmitters are waterproof - so they can be worn all day, every day - and are programmed with unique frequencies for each individual.

St. Charles County families interested in participating in the program should contact the health department at (636) 949-7400 to request an application.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
(636) 949-7400
http://www.sccmo.org/CareTrak
What Is Care Trak?

Introduced in 1986, the Care Trak system allows family members to track loved ones who have a history of wandering from their home. The mobile tracking system uses a radio frequency wrist unit to locate lost individuals.

When an individual wearing this system is reported missing by calling 9-1-1, trained and certified law enforcement agencies can begin the search using the radio telemetry system. The hand-held, directional response system is targeted at the specific frequency assigned to each individual, allowing searchers the ability to track within a few inches of the lost person, day or night, inside or outside. The telemetry system is preferred over GPS and cellphone units because the signal can be tracked inside buildings, in heavy foliage or in times of heavily clouded skies — something that is not always the case with these newer technologies.

Over its more than 25 year existence, the Care Trak system has successfully located several thousand missing participants, with response times of less than thirty minutes!

Participant Requirements

- Must be a St. Charles County resident
- Must possess a medically diagnosed condition, including: Alzheimer’s disease, autism, dementia, or other developmental disabilities
- Must have a history of wandering or be at risk for wandering
- Must be under continuous, 24-hour supervision by an adult caregiver
- Caregiver must commit to daily transmitter checks and to bring these logs to bi-monthly battery checks

Fees and Registration

To participate in the St. Charles County Care Trak program, there is a one-time registration fee of $300 and an ongoing battery replacement fee (currently $6) every two months during the program. This fee includes membership in the program, a waterproof transmitter and tamper-resistant bands to house the unit.

To begin the application process or for registration information, please call the Department of Public Health, at (636) 949-7400.

How Does It Work?

Should an individual registered with St. Charles County’s Care Trak wander away or become lost, their caregiver would call 9-1-1 and notify the dispatcher of their participation in the program. After giving the dispatcher the individual’s name and membership information, trained responders will begin searching for the person immediately upon contact.

Tracking the specific transmitter frequency, the responders will follow the radio signal as it becomes stronger and louder. The response antenna is highly accurate and receives a signal from up to one mile away on the ground and five miles when searching from the air. If an air search is required, the Police Department would utilize its partnership in Metro Air Support, a coordinated effort of St. Charles County, St. Louis City and St. Louis County law enforcement agencies.