

# Missing Drivers With Dementia

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## Antecedents and Recovery

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J Am Geriatr Soc. 2012;60(11):2063-2069.

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## Abstract and Introduction

### Abstract

**Objectives:** To determine the circumstances under which persons with dementia become lost while driving, how missing drivers are found, and how Silver Alert notifications are instrumental in those discoveries.

**Design:** A retrospective, descriptive study.

**Setting:** Retrospective record review.

**Participants:** Conducted using 156 records from the Florida Silver Alert program for October 2008 through May 2010. These alerts were issued in Florida for missing drivers with dementia.

**Measurements:** Information derived from the reports on characteristics of the missing driver, antecedents to missing event, and discovery of a missing driver.

**Results:** The majority of missing drivers were men aged 58 to 94 who were being cared for by a spouse. Most drivers became lost on routine, caregiver-sanctioned trips to usual locations. Only 15% were driving when found, with most being found in or near a parked car. Law enforcement officers found the large majority. Only 40% were found in the county where they went missing, and 10% were found in a different state.

**Conclusion:** Silver Alert notifications were most effective for law enforcement; citizen alerts resulted in a few discoveries. There was 5% mortality in the study population, with those living alone more likely to be found dead than alive. An additional 15% were found in dangerous situations such as stopped on railroad tracks. Thirty-two percent had documented driving or other dangerous errors, such as driving the wrong way or into secluded areas or walking in or near roadways.