

ALASKA PIONEER HOME		P&P No: 04.07
Title: Wandering and Missing Residents		Approval: D. COTE
Key Words: At-Risk, Assessment, Identification, Search, Prevention, Training		
Team: All employees	Effective Date: 8/1/12	Page: 1 of 6

PURPOSE

To ensure that all steps are taken to prevent accidental deaths and injuries of Alaska Pioneer Home (AKPH) residents who wander and are missing from the facility.

POLICY

- The Pioneer Homes assess and identify at-risk residents.
- The Pioneer Homes provide training for the prevention and management of wandering residents.
- The Pioneer Homes have a plan for the search and location of missing residents.
- The Pioneer Homes perform a root cause analysis (RCA) after the event to learn from the incident.

DEFINITIONS

At-risk residents are in danger of harm to themselves or others if not found and returned to the safe Home environment. A resident’s cognitive ability, the ability to make rational decisions, is a major feature of the assessment of risk.

Wandering resident is an at-risk resident who has shown a tendency to stray beyond the view or control of Home staff, thereby requiring a high degree of monitoring and protection to ensure the resident’s safety.

Missing resident is an at-risk resident who disappears from the care area or Home, or during transport to an appointment or event.

Absent resident leaves the facility without signing out or providing staff notification of the absence. The resident does not meet the at-risk criteria. An *absent resident* may be considered a *missing resident* if clinical and environmental factors increase the potential for harm or injury.

Environmental factors are conditions outside the Home that endanger the health and safety of the wandering or missing resident.

Title: Wandering and Missing Residents

Clinical factors are present in the resident's physical body, mind, and spirit that may affect the health of the resident who has wandered from the Home.

Root cause analysis (RCA) is a systematic approach to determine the true cause of a problem so it can be eliminated and the problem does not occur again.

PROCEDURE**I. Assessment****A. Resident assessment**

1. Assess residents to determine the risk potential for those who may wander or become missing from the Home setting.
 - a. Would this resident be safe from harm if allowed to leave the Home on their own?
2. Assess for cognitive impairment of the resident and record in the health record.
 - a. At the time of resident admission, discharge, or transfer between settings;
 - b. As a part of each initial and annual Home assessment; and
 - c. When there is a reported change in mental status.
3. Resident factors that contribute to wandering:
 - a. Dementia, loss of memory.
 - b. Judgment threatens safety of resident.
 - c. Restless, agitated, sporadic behavior.
 - d. Capable of walking significant distances.
 - e. Abrupt changes in level of care or location of room.
 - f. Need for independence.
 - g. Tendency to leave neighborhood locale.
 - h. Wandering behaviors.
 - i. Unexpected bad news or trauma

B. Environment assessment

1. Environment factors that threaten a wandering or missing resident:
 - a. Adverse weather conditions.
 - b. Cold temperatures, snow, rain, or wind if the resident is inadequately dressed.
 - c. Construction work presenting dangerous conditions and equipment.
 - d. Changes in geographic conditions due to disaster.
 - e. Large bodies of water near the facility.
 - f. Fast-moving traffic.
 - g. Darkness, fog, dense tree growth.

Title: Wandering and Missing Residents**C. Identification and detection**

1. In the Pioneer Homes, residents who stray beyond the view or control of the staff may be at-risk for injury or death.
2. The Homes are responsible for all residents under their care.
3. Physically, mentally, and/or cognitively impaired residents require a higher degree of monitoring and protection.
4. Early intervention with wandering residents can minimize the risks.
5. Detection of missing residents early can prevent a negative outcome.

II. Search for the Missing At-Risk Resident**A. Preliminary search**

1. Begins immediately when it is determined that an at-risk resident is missing.
2. Resident's neighborhood areas are searched, including bedrooms, bathrooms, closets, and outside patios.
3. An extended preliminary search includes areas adjacent to the resident's neighborhood, including common areas, kitchen, laundry, offices, stairwells, elevators, and storage closets.
4. Coordinated by designated staff in each area of the Home.

B. Full search

1. If a missing resident is not located during the preliminary search, a full search is authorized by the administrator or designee.
2. Set up a missing resident command center, and choose a staff member to serves as incident commander.
 - a. Incident commander coordinates the search activities of the staff.
 - b. Incident commander remains in the command center to coordinate communication of the telephones and pagers.
3. The staff participating in the search has specific instructions as to what action to initiate if the resident is found.
 - a. The Pioneer Homes do not have legal authority to physically detain a resident against their will off facility property.
4. The staff searches all areas of the Home including those covered by the preliminary search.
 - a. Ground areas, parking lots, parks and recreation areas, woods, neighborhoods, and attractions are included.
 - b. Other buildings, sheds, elevators, construction sites, and structures that could serves as a hiding place.
5. There may be times when local police are notified for at-risk residents.

Title: Wandering and Missing Residents

- a. When appropriate, during or following the full search, contact the police to file a missing persons report.
 - b. Provide needed data about the resident, including name, address, phone number, where and when last seen, what the resident was wearing, description of the resident, and assistive devices used.
- C. Resident search using grid sectors
1. Grid sector method
 - a. Obtain a site plot of the Home and surrounding areas.
 - b. Super-impose a grid map to delineate the grid sectors.
 - c. For example, each grid can be 500 by 500 feet.
 - d. Assign a team to search a grid or number of grids.
 - e. Each grid is searched from south to north.
 - f. Search team members are spaced abreast and sweep by lines.
 - g. Several sweeps may be necessary to cover the grids.
 - h. The team leader is responsible for the safety of the team members and for ensuring the search is completed.
- D. If the resident is found,
1. The team gives first aid if needed, then notifies the incident commander for medical assistance.
 2. If the resident is unharmed, the team transports the resident back to the Home.
 3. If the resident is found deceased, the resident and surrounding area is cordoned off and preserved until instructions and proper authorization has been received.
 4. A progress note is entered into the resident's file with the incident specifics.
 5. The family, POA, physician, and the administrator are notified.

III. Prevention

- A. Minimizing risks for AKPH residents
1. Risks are inherent in the aging resident population.
 2. AKPH is proactive in minimizing risks for the residents under their care.
 3. Prevention of potential risks is balanced against the autonomy due to the residents.
- B. Processes to prevent or effectively manage the wandering and missing resident event.
1. Policies about resident privileges, required supervision and surveillance, and search procedures for early identification of missing residents.

Title: Wandering and Missing Residents

2. Review of actual or close-call missing resident events as part of staff training (awareness training) to enhance existing processes.
 3. New employee orientation that includes training about identifying, assessing, and finding missing residents.
 4. Annual missing resident drills that integrate findings from rounds of the Home, premises, and safety measures.
 - a. An actual search can substitute for a drill.
 5. A systematic and comprehensive monitoring and assessment of hazardous areas and construction sites.
 6. Ensure the location of at-risk residents.
 - a. *Electronic technology* such as Code Alert is used with professional vigilance and systematic verification of residents' locations.
 - 1) There are frequent, systematic checks of the system's critical components.
 - 2) A complete system check is performed annually.
 - 3) Maintenance of the system is consistent with manufacturer's guidelines.
 - 4) Electronic devices are re-evaluated when a wandering or missing resident event occurs.
 - b. *Activity locations* away from the Home are evaluated for safety and supervision of at-risk residents.
 - c. *Identification* ensures that pictures and physical descriptions for at-risk residents are available, to enhance the search procedures.
 - d. *Transport* of at-risk residents requires special precautions.
- C. Awareness training
1. Prevention and management of wandering residents is included in initial orientation and other ongoing training.
 2. Specific training for reporting actual missing residents is provided to relevant staff.
 3. The comprehensive review of the event enhances resident and environmental safety awareness.
 4. The prevention and effective management of wandering and missing residents is based on the staff awareness of each at-risk resident's status of cognitive ability and danger to self or others.

Title: Wandering and Missing Residents**IV. Administrator's Responsibilities**

A. Missing resident procedures

1. Implement policy for a missing resident search.
2. Secure construction sites and environmental hazards to minimize risk of unsafe area.
3. Designate staff for resident assessment, level of search determination, incident command, communication with family, area search coordination, and notification of police.
4. Provide timely and thorough search procedures.
5. Assure training of staff for competency in the care of wandering or missing residents.
6. Assure a root cause analysis after each missing resident event.
7. Allow continuous learning from training, annual drills, close calls, and actual events.

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

New: 1/1/12

Revised: 7/20/12

Reviewed: 3/15/12

ATTACHMENTS**REFERENCES**