



Oregon

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ODHS-25-032-CBC Provider Alert

Date: June 11, 2025

To: All Assisted Living Providers
All Residential Care Providers

From: Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit

Subject: Elopement Awareness and Extreme Heat in Memory Care

Memory care facilities provide specialized services in secured environments for individuals with dementia. Due to the diagnosis of dementia, most residents residing in memory care facilities are at risk for elopement. To identify who is at risk for elopement, facilities should review residents' initial evaluations, service plans, history, behaviors and talk with families. Confusion, anxiety and restlessness are common signs.

To prevent elopement, facilities must evaluate residents for risk of elopement, and that information must be included on residents' service plans. Facilities should keep wandering residents engaged, use staff to help with orientation and secure doors with alarms. Staff must be trained to recognize early warning signs and calmly intervene. Facility training must include topics as outlined in Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 411-057-0155 (2). Familiar routines and family involvement help too.

Residents may wander or elope due to memory loss, unmet needs like hunger or pain, confusing environments or emotional distress. Medication side effects can also play a role. Facilities are responsible to check all exits and egress points regularly to ensure they are in good repair and secure. Broken locks, damaged doors or unlocked gates can increase elopement risk.

Memory care facilities should be especially aware of residents in secured outdoor recreation areas during times of extreme weather, and staff should monitor residents when using secured outdoor recreation areas. Additionally, per OAR 411-057-0170(6)(e), doors to outdoor recreation areas may be

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locked during nighttime hours or during severe weather according to facility policy.

Special note on extreme heat

During hot weather, residents may become more restless or try to leave seeking cooler areas. Facilities should provide safe, shaded outdoor spaces and monitor hydration closely. Residents must be dressed appropriately for the weather, and staff should monitor to ensure residents are comfortably dressed. Heat can increase confusion and agitation, so staff should be extra vigilant.

Tips for staying cool

- Keep blinds closed
- Close off unused parts of buildings
- Unplug unnecessary electrical items
- Stay inside during hottest times of day
- Hydrate! Ensure liquids are plentiful and offered regularly to residents

If you have questions, please contact your licensing team at
cbc.team@odhs.oregon.gov.

[Oregon Department of Human Services website](#)