



How to Help

Transit drivers can help those living with dementia by implementing dementia-friendly practices and by reporting suspected elder or dependent adult abuse to Adult Protective Services (APS).

APS is a program administered by Aging & Independence Services (AIS), a department of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. APS serves older adults aged 60 and older, as well as dependent adults aged 18-59, who are being harmed, or threatened with harm, to ensure their right to safety and dignity.

Contact APS (see below) if you observe, suspect, or have knowledge of physical abuse, financial abuse, abduction, isolation, abandonment, neglect by others, or self-neglect. Anyone can report suspected abuse, not just legally mandated reporters.

Make a Report

Call AIS at (800) 339-4661

Any person can make a report through this 24-hour reporting line for suspected elder or dependent adult abuse. The report can be made anonymously. Mandated reporters can file a report online at

<https://sandiego.leapsportal.net/LEAPSIntake>.

To learn more, visit:

- **Aging & Independence Services** (www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov)
- **National Center on Elder Abuse** (www.ncea.acl.gov)



Dementia-Friendly Tips and Elder Abuse Prevention for Transportation Providers

For more resources and information for older adults, visit www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov or call (800) 339-4461



**LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO**

Cognitive changes can make driving unsafe for individuals living with dementia and others on the road. Therefore, as a transit driver, you provide an essential service: safe, accessible transportation. Through dementia-friendly practices, transit drivers—including bus operators, medical transport providers, and volunteer drivers—can ensure that people with dementia remain independent and socially connected.



10 Warning Signs & Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD)

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Difficulty planning or solving problems
3. Forgetting how to do familiar tasks
4. Confusion with dates, time, or place
5. Trouble with spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing objects and the inability to retrace steps
8. Altered decision making and poor judgement
9. Withdrawal from work or social situations
10. Mood swings and changes in personality



Dementia-Friendly Communication Skills

- Greet people warmly. Explain why you're there and where you're taking them.
- Build good rapport with passengers, so they will feel comfortable asking for help.
- Give clear, concise, and simple directions.
- Respond to questions, even when asked more than once.
- Slow your pace slightly and allow time for the person to process and respond.
- Keep communication simple; ask one question at a time.
- Be aware of body language; smile, make eye contact at eye level.
- Behavior of passengers with dementia may be unfamiliar to you. Remain calm and flexible in these situations.
- Avoid arguing with or embarrassing the person with dementia.
- Treat the person with dignity and respect.
- Notify the passenger when you have arrived at their destination. Clearly identify the destination as home, bus stop, etc.
- People with dementia may have challenges paying a fare. Provide extra time and support, if needed.

Making Your Rides

Dementia-Friendly

- Be sensitive to difficult behaviors such as yelling or calling out. Remain calm and professional, and do not take this behavior personally or argue.
- Use soothing music to calm an agitated passenger.
- If possible, provide a higher level of service than curb-to-curb, such as door-to-door or door-through-door.
- Sign up for and pay attention to "Silver Alerts" and other missing person announcements.
- If in a vehicle, seat the passenger in the back seat and engage the passenger safety locks to prevent untimely door openings.
- Check that the passenger seat belts are fastened properly.
- If on a bus, direct the passenger to take a seat near the front of the bus, and let them know you will alert them when you arrive at their stop. Use the lower step or ramp if you see someone who looks like they might need extra support.
- Be patient; people with dementia may experience confusion relating to where they are going, how to pay the fare, or how to alert you of their upcoming stop.
- Only let the passenger exit at their scheduled destination (if known).
- Report problems to a supervisor; most transit agencies and transportation providers have policies and procedures to address overall safety concerns and customer care.
- Make clear announcements to keep passengers informed when routes are disrupted or changed.