

**SOME INFORMATION  
SPECIFICALLY FOR THE  
FAMILIES OF YOUR RESIDENTS**

- Remind family to continually update the inventory list.
- Let family and residents know that the facility safe is available for use.
- Talk to the resident and family about the Patient Trust Account for money for resident's personal use, such as beauty parlor and outings.
- Suggest that expensive real jewelry be placed in the safe, kept safe at home, and have either a costume jewelry replacement or a reproduction made of the original.
- Ask family to provide a small container to hold dentures, glasses, hearing aids, etc., if the facility does not have containers available.
- Provide mesh laundry bags for small items.
- Remind family to inquire about insurance policy to cover loss and theft, perhaps through their homeowner's policy.
- Provide the family with the staff loss and theft coordinator's name and facility number.
- Provide a method of reporting loss and theft when the coordinator is unavailable.

**AFTER THE FACT**

- Fill out a missing item report and give one copy to the resident's family.
- Keep a log at each nurses station for families to report and note missing items.
- Call police to show the missing item is taken seriously.
- Discharge any employee guilty of theft immediately.
- Use dye on (planted) money to stain hands, when money is stolen.
- Alert and consult facility attorney when necessary and when asking employees to take a lie detector test.
- Continually compile statistics to note ration of articles permanently lost versus those found. This will help monitor loss and theft situations.
- Remind family that their homeowner's insurance policy could possibly provide loss and theft protection within a nursing facility.

Notes: As in any business with posted signs saying "Not responsible for lost or stolen items" the claimant has the right to complain about and to report theft.

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**SUGGESTIONS TO  
REDUCE LOSS AND  
THEFT  
WITHIN LONG TERM  
CARE FACILITIES**

***How to Protect the  
Personal Property of  
Residents***

Your District LongTerm  
Care Ombudsman

Your Agency Name  
Address  
city, KY zip  
phone number  
We bsite

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION

**Residents** of nursing homes have little to remind them of home. Most live two or three to a room and have only a small night stand, bureau, and closet to hold their personal possessions. This lack of space requires a resident to pare down belongings and exposes them to the potential for having their things lost or stolen. Few facilities routinely provide residents with a space where they can lock and secure treasured items to prevent loss and theft.

To clarify terms used in these suggestions, the following definitions are applied:

**Loss:** Misplacement (temporary or permanent) of a resident's possessions. This definition includes misappropriation of a resident's possessions by a mentally impaired resident.

**Theft:** An intentional taking of a resident's possession by another for personal use or sale.

*Loss or theft can occur in five different ways: Staff to resident; family to resident; visitor to resident; resident to resident; and resident to self.*

Incidents involving resident to resident or resident to self are often more easily solved. A resident's dementia and forgetfulness may lead to lost (misplaced) items, which can usually be found through searches of the surrounding area. Incidents involving staff, family, or visitors are more difficult to resolve.

This brochure can be shared through resident and family council meetings and staff training. We hope that the ideas in the brochure will help prevent the loss and theft of vulnerable nursing home residents' personal possessions.

- Ask the police department to check the facility for any security problems. Schedule them to routinely give training on loss and theft prevention. Ask them to help identify and mark important facility and resident items.
- Install a surveillance system.
- Screen potential employees.
- Protect facility property by securing TV's or other important furniture or items.
- Develop a loss and theft policy; make sure it is followed and enforced by all staff members.
- Occasionally use facility newsletter to heighten loss and theft awareness.
- Provide a secure box or drawer for residents personal use.
- Have a quarterly "Claim Days" for unclaimed and unmarked item retrieval.
- Hold in-service training on a regular basis to show that theft does matter and is a problem for all concerned when it occurs.
- Train staff to report any employee who steals.
- Demonstrate high regard for all personal property by not allowing staff to borrow from residents.
- Prohibit employees from accepting any gifts from residents without their supervisor's knowledge.
- Distribute Loss and Theft Brochure to incoming residents.
- Appoint a staff member as the coordinator for any loss and theft problems. Make sure the name is posted in visible areas for the family members and residents to see.
- Require all staff to help reduce problems. Have kitchen and dining room staff scan dinner trays; have laundry staff check pockets and hampers; use housekeeping staff to check floors, waste baskets, trash cans, and closets. (Using transparent trash liners helps.)
- Remind staff that residents have little in the way of personal items, so any loss affects both the resident's emotional and physical well being.
- Do not allow staff to take one resident's possessions for another resident without permission.
- Involve residents through their Resident Council to help promote loss and theft prevention.
- Make sure all loss and theft situations are documented. Post notices at nurses stations so staff can keep an eye out for the missing item. Review records quarterly to identify any trends.
- Include any missing items in the facility daily reports.
- Stock indelible markers at the nurses station available to write names on resident's clothing and personal items if not already done by family or resident prior to entering the facility.
- Fasten cupboards and closets at non-traditional heights to lessen chances of confused residents locating latches and rummaging through other resident's belongings.
- Make sure the resident's inventory list is obtained at entry.
- Use the inventory list at transfer to another facility or when the resident is discharged.