

Safeguarding Residents' Property

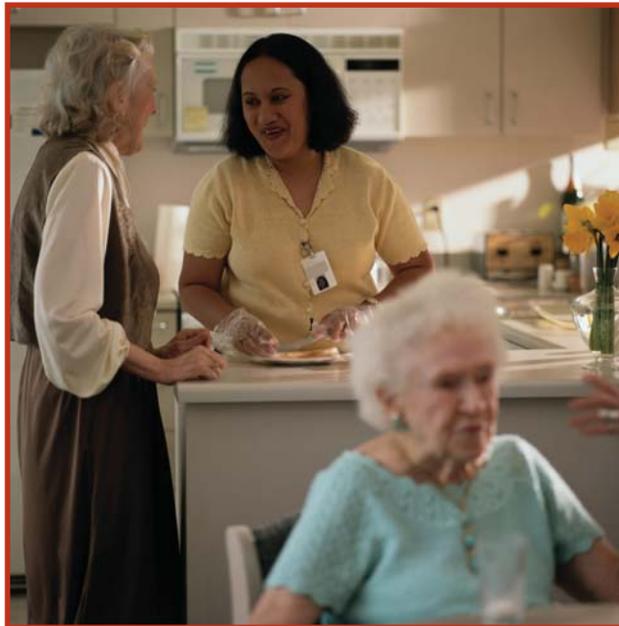
- Why Residents' Belongings are So Important
- Five Steps to Keep Things Safe
- A Checklist for Everyone

Handle With Care

If we could, we would stamp every item that belongs to a resident with the words "HANDLE WITH CARE." But that's not practical. So the next best thing is to make sure everyone understands why resident belongings are special.

For one thing, the space available for residents' things is usually very limited. That means difficult choices have been made—so the items a resident has selected usually have particular importance to that resident. They may be cherished reminders of family or friends, or of days past. Or they may enable the person to continue a favorite hobby or interest.

Personal belongings also play an important role in resident care. They're like a window into the person as an individual. What are his special interests? What personal history and relationships are important to her? Books, photos, and mementos also help set the stage



Make sure new items of property are marked with the resident's name.

for active involvement in the life of the facility. And, of course, there are some items—like eyeglasses, dentures, and hearing aids—that the resident uses day in and day out.

So it's easy to see why safeguarding residents' property is a very high priority!

How Things Get Lost or Stolen

Most of the time, residents' things stay right where they belong. But unfortunately, there are exceptions to the rule, and something the resident brought to the facility or was given as a gift can't be found.

The reasons for missing items vary, as you might imagine. But

often they include these problems:

- Someone places the item where it isn't noticed, for example, on a food tray or in bedding. It is accidentally thrown out.
- An item wasn't clearly marked with the resident's name. It gets lost when the laundry is being done.

- There is a misunderstanding. A family member takes an item home, but forgets to let the resident and facility know, so the list of the resident's personal items does not get updated.
- Occasionally, someone—it could be an employee, a resident, a guest, or an intruder—steals from a resident.

Five Steps For Keeping Property Safe

Here are five simple steps everyone—residents, family members, and staff—can take to help keep resident property safe and right where it belongs:

1. *Make sure every item of property is marked* with the resident's name and is included on the resident's list of belongings. When the resident purchases something new or receives it as a gift, it too should be marked and placed on the list. And just as important, when the resident gives an item to a family member or friend, it should be removed from the list, so people won't think it's missing later on.
2. *Know where items belong...and where they don't.* Smaller items, especially, need a home: a case for eyeglasses; a denture container; a jewelry box for small personal items.
3. *Items of particular value* (for example, a valuable painting or sculpture or expensive jewelry) probably don't belong in the facility at all,

unless special arrangements can be made for their safekeeping when not in use.

4. *Stay alert.* Be on the lookout for items that don't belong where they are or could easily be overlooked by someone cleaning up.
5. *If you spot a problem (or one in the making), speak up.* If something is missing, let the facility know right away. Be as specific as possible in describing the item that's gone and what the circumstances are. If you spot anything that's suspicious—or that you believe creates a risk of losing something through carelessness—let the facility know.



Personal belongings are very important to our residents, so protecting property is a high priority in our facility.

Checklist for Safeguarding Residents' Property

- Understand why residents' personal belongings are especially important.
- Stay alert for items that are in the wrong place and could be accidentally lost.
- Notice and report anything suspicious, including any person who does not have a valid reason for being in the facility.
- Make sure all resident property is marked with the resident's name.
- Keep the resident's individual listing of his/her belongings up-to-date.
- Store smaller items in appropriate containers.
- Report any missing items promptly.

My Notes