

Inexpensive Safety Devices to Alert Caregivers Their Loved One is on the Move

by Sandy Price

One of the main concerns of a caregiver is keeping those for whom they care for safe. Daytime activities and night time trips to the bathroom are just a few things that can create a safety concern. And, when caring for an aging loved one who is a fall-risk and has dementia, the task can seem like a losing battle. Fortunately, I found an affordable solution at the local hardware store when I cared for my mother with dementia.

My mom was able to get around with the use of a walker, but did not always remember to use the walker even if it was right next to her—especially during the night. One day, as I was walking through one of my favorite hardware stores, I discovered an unconventional solution to alert me when my mom was getting out of bed—a **driveway alarm** and it was less than \$15! Basically, it is a battery operated, motion sensing device that sends an alert to a wireless monitor when motion is detected. The manufacturer says it has a range of up to 400 feet away. No wiring is needed; the motion sensor can be moved to anywhere you want to detect motion; and the alert monitor can be turned on and off as desired.



I used the driveway alarm throughout the night and day to alert me to the times my mom needed assistance which allowed me the freedom to do other tasks around the house. During the night, I put the motion detector in my mom's bedroom and had the monitor in my bedroom so it could wake me if my mom got up in the middle of the night. In the early morning hours, I would take the monitor with me outside so I could work in the yard while she was still sleeping. The alarm would go off when she started moving and I was able to return inside and assist her with her morning routine. If she was upstairs sitting on the couch and I was downstairs in my craft room, I would place the motion detector near her and take the monitor with me so I could be alerted if she got up which helped me make sure she was moving about safely. If you care for a loved one who is not at risk of falling, but has a tendency to leave the home without your knowledge, a strategically placed driveway alarm may be a great help to alert you to their movement.



Another device that I used to keep my mom safe acted as both a deterrent and a security feature for our home. It is the **door/window entry alarms**. The alarm costs less than \$5; has three settings: off, chime and alarm; and installs easily with the included sticky foam. When I installed it, I cut into my door trim a little bit for the sensors to line up correctly. I usually set the device to chime during the day and alarm during the night. The two-tone chime alerted me if my mom had opened the door to someone; was heading outside and needed some assistance; or the home health aide was entering our home through the unlocked door. When set to the continuous alarm, it deterred both unwanted exiting and entering of our home during the night.

The combination of the driveway alarm and the door/window entry alarms gave me a peace-of-mind knowing I would be alerted when there was a potential risk to my mom's safety and it allowed me some much desired flexibility in between my caregiving duties.

Author's Note: I have also noticed as of the writing of this tip (Nov. 2020) that Walmart sells the driveway alarm with several motion detectors and one monitor for less than \$60.

Disclaimer: This is simply a tip from one caregiver to another, it is not a guarantee that it will keep you or your loved-one safe or accident-free. No compensation from Harbor Freight, WalMart, the manufacturers of the products, or any of their affiliates was given nor is the writer in any way affiliated with them other than as a consumer of their products.