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Caregivers Need Identification Cards

Are you someone who cares for another person, requiring regular care and/or supervision? Imagine for a minute that you are involved in an accident or personal medical emergency some day.

- You are on your way to your care recipient's home to deliver needed medications and involved in an auto accident;
- You leave your loved one for an hour to run errands while they are napping, but end up in the emergency room instead following a fall or heart condition.
- You call the paramedics to your own home for a medical emergency, but are responsible for delivering meals and administering medications to your aunt two blocks over, or are expecting your child with disabilities to arrive home in an hour from a day program.

While these may sound like extreme situations, they are real scenarios that have happened to caregivers. It is important that emergency personnel (police, fire department, and/or emergency room professionals) know that you are a caregiver and that someone is counting on you for their own health and safety. Many family caregivers still don't consider themselves as a caregiver, but they are. This is just another safety provision that you need to consider to ensure the well-being of the person you care for.

Recommendations:

Create and carry an emergency ID card prominently in your wallet that has your name and identifies you as a caregiver. You could use something sturdy like a recipe card for example.

On the card, you should list:

- name and location of the care recipient
- your relationship to the care recipient
- another caregiver or family member with a phone number

- a message indicating whether that person is OK to be left alone

Also, consider placing an Emergency File Card on your refrigerator with the same caregiver information as above. Paramedics are trained to look at the refrigerator for information on you and will have the information they need to ensure the safety of your care recipient as well (whether they live in the home or at another residence).

If applicable, consider adding additional information on the individual's medical situation and medication needs to further assist them.

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