



SERVING PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

Tips for Transit Drivers
Serving People with
Dementia in Florida



REACH

Resources & Education
for **Aging, Community, and Health**

[SafeMobilityFL.com](https://www.SafeMobilityFL.com)

Dementia-friendly Transportation goes beyond age-friendliness. It is a transportation service that considers the special needs of passengers with all stages of memory loss.

Passengers with dementia (such as Alzheimer’s disease) may have difficulty communicating clearly. They may be confused about the name of their destination, or forget they just asked a question seconds earlier.

It’s not always easy to identify persons living with dementia, signs may include:

| SIGN | IDENTIFYING BEHAVIOR |
|---|---|
| Memory problems | Not remembering the time of their scheduled ride |
| Difficulty completing familiar tasks | Problems paying transit fare |
| Misplacing things and not being able to retrace their steps | Leaving their personal belongings behind |
| Confusion with location or passage of time | Anxious about missing their destination... e.g. “are we there yet?” |
| Challenges with vision | Not seeing how far their feet are from a step |
| Poor judgement or decision making | Attempting to move around while the vehicle is in motion |

Tips for Supporting Passengers with Dementia

- > Use friendly facial expressions and gestures.
 - Say hello and introduce yourself.
 - Explain why you're there and where you're taking them.
- > Be patient. Use short sentences and allow enough time to respond.
- > Keep a pen and paper in your cab so you can write a message down if the patient does not understand what you say.
- > If the passenger becomes upset, **remain calm and professional**. Do not take their behavior personally or argue. Try one or more of the following:
 - Compliment the passenger on an item they are wearing or carrying for distraction.
 - Ask the passenger to tell you about their favorite food, person or activity.
 - Play music to their taste to help calm them.
 - Contact your dispatch representative for information that you can use to help them stay calm.
- > Ask the passenger for permission to help them with a task or to enter their personal space.
- > Only let the passenger exit at their scheduled destination.
- > Notify the passenger when you have arrived at their destination since a passenger may not be able to read anymore or recognize it through a window. Clearly identify the destination as home, sister's house, etc.

This publication was created in collaboration with the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition and the Florida State University College of Medicine's REACH program.

Reach.med.fsu.edu

connect.reach@med.fsu.edu

SafeMobilityFL.com

contact@safemobilityfl.com

833-930-2952



REACH

Resources & Education
for **Aging, Community, and Health**



DEMENTIA
CARE & CURE INITIATIVE

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS

Developing Dementia-Caring Communities Across Florida



TARGET
ZERO
FATALITIES & SERIOUS INJURIES

FSU

**PEPPER INSTITUTE ON
AGING & PUBLIC POLICY**

FSU

GERIATRICS

